Forest Leaves

and

Three

or

Genevra's Tower

Mary Hulett Young

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Brooks gurgle through their mosses, falling o'er
Low mimic ledges. *Page 45.*

FOREST LEAVES

AND

THREE; Or, GENEVRA'S TOWER

BY

Mary Hulett Young

OMNIA BONA BONIS

Second Edition

PRINTED BY
H. O. HOUGHTON & COMPANY
The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
1887

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge.

"Verse is an incantation, with dominion over powers of the air. Prose is a sword at one's side to hew a path on earth.

"Have nothing to do with poetry if you can help it, — if you can help it; and if you can't help it, care nothing for my judgment, nor for any man's, but, writing as little as you can, bide your time."

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FIRST PROEM.

Thank Heaven for kingly souls, —
For thought that overrolls
All littleness, and bright
And broad gives back the light
Of truth! . . . Thank heaven for him,
One of the seraphim
Humbled to earthly woe,
With pent immortal fire,
With soul a daily pyre
Of hopes, — Art's Angelo.

For William Shakespeare's name
Thank heaven! His crown of fame
Is not a thing that came
For swift and light transfer, —
Thank heaven for thoughts that were
Shaped into deathless words
True as the might which girds
Eternal justice, — words
Immortal as the mind
To which they entrance find.
Where memory's tide can flow,
Onward for joy or woe
Still must their presence go.

Moved on perforce, what if
Weak hands uplift the pen
Or marble of the cliff
Dare chisel? When, oh, when
Can aught but humbleness
A spirit true possess?

SECOND PROEM.

Still leaves of thought, which on a shore unknown
From life's tree whispering fell, as the soft tide
Of morning air and sea-breeze wandering wide
Have swept it, — or the sudden storm-wind blown, —
Once more ye are upgathered, and now strown
Abroad on flowing waters. Should ye glide
Where some still voyager from his shallop's side
May trace your half-told meaning, and a lone
Sweet sense come o'er him, calm as brooding dove,
Softening all pain, and lighting up all light, —
The sense of Sovereign, deep, mysterious Love,
Pervading joy that makes all beauty bright, —
Then more than diamond dust were the rich gain —
Then, trembling leaves, ye were not strown in vain.

THIRD PROEM.

THOUGHTS of poets rustle low
As the leaves when south winds blow,
Like the rustling, whispering leaves
They are hushed by summer eves.

And they listen, hushed, and white,
In the starry, silvery night,
For an angel's gliding wings,
And they keep some words he brings.

Thoughts of poets, worship-stilled,
Wait a prophecy fulfilled
Which the inner life has spoken,
Signed and sealed by truest token.

Spirit hunger, sweeter far
Than the sense-born banquets are,
Is the token — 't is the spell
Which can rule the earth-life well.

FOREST LEAVES.

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY.

Beauty dwelleth everywhere,
O'er the earth, and in the air, —
But a sacred chrism must lie
On thy heart to clear the eye.

Beauty, dowered from above,
Smiles alone when pleadeth love, —
Hand that toucheth hand with hate
Knocks in vain at beauty's gate.

Waving tree-tops, closely wed,
Benediction on each head,
Win the golden sunlight down
Through their leaves and branches brown.

Daily beauty smiles around,
Joys prophetic have been found
When the lesson shineth clear, —
Beauty means that God is near.

YES, I HAVE WORSHIPED BEAUTY.

Yes, I have worshiped beauty — worship still.
Where shines this garment of the Holy One
I bow to kiss its hem, and feel a thrill
To be so near the Might, the Light, the Throne.

Throned in God's thought must sovereign beauty dwell,
And at his will it glows to mortal view, —
In lightning splendor now it flameth well —
Now smiles a rose impearled with evening dew.

And I have worshiped beauty in the light
Of kindling eyes, and lips all eloquent
When seemed supernal powers unveiled to sight,
And words of fire to human thought were lent.

Still, I must worship beauty. I must keep
This rapture to my life — this truant tone
Of heaven's full harmony; and high, and deep,
Must seek, and find eternal beauty's throne.

THE CHILD GENEVRA.

All day the wind sang its minstrel lays
With harmonies varied and quaint,
Across the meadows, and through the leaves,
Around the gables, and under the eaves, —
Now high and proud as a conqueror's praise,
Now like hymns of a cloistered saint.

Little Genevra in the porch
Threw back the chestnut hair
From her full white brow, and listening stood
While the oak-tree waved to the waving wood,
And the maple on high swung a crimson torch
For autumn kindled there.

Below the meadow grass was swayed
Along its level sea,
To tossing billowy waves of green,
With foam of laughing sunlight sheen,
That lightly-curling, wavering, played
With the wind in tireless glee.

Little Genevra with smiling eyes,
Where lights and shadows flit
Above their deep so crystalline,
Unconsciously yields a worship divine, —
Soul's joy in the beautiful, which dies
From life if wrong enter it.

WITHERED LEAVES.

FROM THE BOOK OF A DECEASED FRIEND.

Ye withered leaves of long ago,
Strange is the tale ye tell, —
Why come ye from your hiding-place
To break time's Lethean spell?

O blue deep smiling eyes of love,
O waxen white hands crossed, —
Alas, that these frail leaves are here
And ye to me so lost!

Ache, struggling heart, ache on, ache on, —
Thy very pain is cheer;
The chains that hurt thee link afar —
Ache on, but do not fear.

QUESTIONIS.

My soul is like a silent listening bird
Beneath the darkling pine woods flitted lone
With noiseless motion; while a hushing tone
Of some sweet mystery is ever heard
Through the green harpstrings by a low wind stirred;
And if too near some harsher sound has grown
My pained ear waits, my thoughtful moods bemoan

The broken spell, the cabalistic word
That lingered passing. Nature's rhythmic dower,
Gurgle of rills in springtime, and the throb
Of waves against their barriers, or, more strange,
The spirit voice of winds, had they the power
For us earth's deepest secret forth to sob, —
Alas, if 't were but drear material change!

"THE DIVINE IDEA OF THE WORLD."

"The Lord answered out of a whirlwind." "He quieteth the earth with the south wind."

"A man who had never seen the sun rise, seeing it for the first time, would discern it to be Godlike."

I LIST for a voice that speaks to me
From the lingering wind and the waving tree
As evening falls with its solemn power,
And mystery fills the strange sweet hour.
I catch one tone, and I strive in vain
To blend the meanings I scarcely gain
Into a something which sense and soul
Can grasp as part of a teaching whole, —
Something is spoken, I fain would know
Whence came the whispers, and whither they go.

O soul of mine that dwellest dim
Beneath the rays of the seraphim,

Hast thou marked the lightning's fiery gleam
Or seen the moon with silver beam
O'er the tidal swell of ocean's waves
Rule mild as love her mighty slaves, —
Hast thou heard the rolling thunder's mirth
And chanting winds round thy home of earth, —
Hast thou caught the far-off cataract's roar
Yet learned no more? Yet learned no more?
Learned only this, a questioning wild?
Alas thou child! alas thou child!

There are voices deep of dread and power,
There are whispers soft of the spring-tide hour,
There are wooing voices of earth and air,
There are kindly voices that banish care, —
Triumphant voices that stir and thrill
With might of a music grander still;
And through these voices, hushed or high,
Morn's chorus joy or evening's sigh,
One changeless truth all grief beguiles,
For us a Father lives, — and smiles;
A Sovereign Sire, whose starry state
Bids thrones and powers in reverence wait,
Speeds systems and worlds on their flying march
Through the soundless deep of night's blue arch, —
A Father near us, around our way
Where raindrops fall, and forests sway,
Where grows the grass, or unfolds the flower,
Where light o'er the dial tells the hour, —

Yes, nearer still, for He is part
Of the kindling eye and beating heart, —
Each pulse-throb born of our joy or pain
He knows, each toil, nor will leave it vain.
By thy childhood's ear deep truth was heard
In the summer rill, from the singing bird;
In the soft air's kiss on thy flushing cheek
Thou hast felt the love that did not speak, —
Trust God, and know that Love wedded to Power
Makes hope assurance, gives joy for each hour.
Trust God, and know that the griefs which bless,
The thirst for a high pure happiness,
The sighs for a something still vainly sought,
Are no "half-hinges" of fruitless thought.
By reason, hopefulness, and right,
We learn from the wild bird's southern flight,
When autumn chills the clouded morn
And gathered all is the ripened corn,
That for each white-winged thought that soars
Beyond time's bleak and fading shores
To seek another clime more fair
Where throbs and smiles congenial air,
Such summer clime must surely be
A sweet and restful certainty.

Trust God, thou trembling soul of mine,
Behold his works that breathe and shine!
When shadow-fringed his garment's hem,
When dim thy sight to mark the gem *

* Love, or love-purpose.

Whose splendor lights a charmed way
Through blinding terrors to Sovereign Day, —
Still upward strive from death and dust,
From sordid thoughts like cankering rust,
From the gathering gloom of grief and pain, —
Though worn the heart, and worn the brain, —
Still upward strive, through toiling and rest,
Still upward to reach the Father's breast.

CHOICE OF A HOME.

Build not on lowlands. Choose a pleasant height
And one still higher, grander, rising near
With gleaming crown where skies are ever clear.
Live where below are all the mists of night
That mildew and obscure our true birthright
Of happiness, — do thus, and even here
Life beams a new spring morning dear
With welcome beauty for the spirit's sight.
The far-off sea shall shining crest, and toss
With vast rejoicing; and the drifting winds,
With harmonies unheard before, shall cross
The bending tree-tops, while the melted snow
From cottage eaves a gift in sunlight finds
Purer than Eastern pearls to flash and glow.

PERFECTNESS IN NATURE INANIMATE MORE THAN IN MAN.

This plume of grass, this fresh rosebud,
Though culled in Heaven's own air,
Could scarce show more of perfectness
Than clothes them now so fair.

The stately tree that waves aloft
'Neath this all-halcyon sky
Might wave as well a graceful part
Of scenes divinely high.

One thing alone below the sun
Keeps not its sovereign charm,
And faintly proves its builder's hand, —
The marred, mocked human form.

One place, most wondrous 'neath the skies
With madness oft is rife, —
The haunted chamber of the mind,
The palace of our life.

GENEVRA.

I.

A Poet's daughter rare and bright,
All dreams of beauty, joy, and light

Were to her life a heritage.
She needed not the learned page
To show that an all-wondrous Power
Moves veiled in nature. The high dower
To feel, to know, to love, to own
His presence, bow beneath his throne,
Was hers ere childhood sought to frame
In word the mystery of his name.
A poet's daughter, — yet her sire
She had not known, — his ringing lyre
Was dropped to earth, the chords all broken,
His life-dream new, his best unspoken.
With pale hand o'er her infant head
The bright uplifted face he read,
And with slow smile and reverent eyes
He vowed her to the sovereignties
Of all pure thoughts that seal and bless
From need of humbler happiness.
Then dreamily his memory far
Wandered, where bright with morning star
And all the heavens' shining crown,
Grand snow-white mountain peaks look down
In depths of a clear beauteous lake, —
As God's white majesty doth make
A stainless soul his mirror. Low,
And faintly murmuring as the flow
Of a spent fountain, "for my sake,"
He said, "call her Genevra. Child,
My daughter, bright one, undefiled,

Thou bearest in thy new life the same
Heaven-kindled and undying flame
That rayed my altar. It may be
Words yet shall show splendor I only see."

Claude calmly slept, — but earth no more
Knew his awakening. Morning bore
Her light to a hushed room, where lay
A statue form of noblest — clay.
Lingering there, a youthful wife
Refused to weep, — was there not life
In the still grandeur of that brow,
And soul in the mute eloquence
That dreamed like joy of saintly vow
On lips of untold beauty? Whence
Should come intrusive tears to shade
The haloed vision which death made
All sacred now, and yet to be
A starry calm of memory.

II.

The Poet's widowed bride had wealth,
Friends of high station, beauty, health,
And all that schools and culture give
Of treasures that youth's hours outlive.
Not hers alone the subtle grace
Of polished manner, and the race
Of deft white fingers o'er the keys;
But, thoughtfully as one who sees

More than the surfaces of things,
Of customs, characters, and brings
The tests of reason to decide
Questions of passion and of pride,
She took her chosen noiseless way.
The whispered words half-heard that day
When her pale poet closed his eyes
Were cherished as the changeless ties
Where'er that spirit life might soar
To raise her own to it once more.
The mother left no menial hand
To wield a mother's sacred wand,
No menial's sullen frown to blight
The soft eyes' kindling, questioning light,
No harsh voice answering to the cry
Of the young lips that should not sigh;
But, turning from the flattering throng
That craved her rich voice in the song,
She breathed her infant's lullaby.
Full was the guerdon to her breast
Of all a mother's heart knows best
As, with a beauty half divine,
The radiant child, so pure, so fine,
Burst forth as from a chrysalis
Winged with young raptures, formed for bliss.
Not slow love's watchful care to mark
The changing eye, now bright, now dark,
Nerves quivering with the living thought,

The breathless hush with feeling fraught,
The languid calm of frame o'erwrought.
Time, passing with its changes, soon
Mother and teacher merged in one,
Wisely, considerately kind.
Often as came the summer boon
Of flowers, and bird-song, and low wind
Among the grasses, they would go,
Teacher and pupil, where none know
The weary steps of fashion's feet;
And by old forests as they list
Or lone lake's mountain mirror sweet,
With nature's self they held true tryst,
Far from the mockery and mist
That hide her charm we fain would greet.
Faint bloom stole through young Psyche's cheek,
The thrilling nerves no more were weak;
The father's wasting fire gave way
To soothing gladness calm as day.

Then brightly for Genevra came
School-days at last; for, too, her name
Must stand on the proud record, where
Smile learning's stately temples. "Fair
And silverly" on her must fall
The halo of diploma, — all
That fills and brightens the one day
Which opens far life's prosperous way, —
Therefore the school-days came at last.

With them was opened too the vast
Wide world of books Genevra knew
But by a rich and chosen few
Conned pleasantly in music rare
Of her true teacher's voice, with care
Selecting and rejecting, so
That purest gems, — diamonds that glow
With all-unshadowed light must be
The earliest setting she can see
In memory's chain placed fittingly.

III.

Like that of forest aisles a shade,
Blent with soft rainbow tints, and made
Most beautiful the classic hall
With its high tracery o'er all
Its honored memories. Within
Lingered a group of girls to win
In playful talk a respite kind
After the school-tasks; and to bind
In closer braid their school-girl faith
In changeless friendship — a mist wraith
Sometimes, yet oft a golden glow
Of sunbeams which no setting know.

One with chestnut hair all curly
On her brow so white, so pearly,
Read by a window.

Quickly spoke
A frolicsome gay girl, and woke
The echoes of the stately hall;
But let the high tone softly fall
With sparkling laughter from dark eyes
Whose mischief oft in kindness dies.
"I do protest, Genevra Hale,"
She said, "and will o'er hill, o'er dale
Proclaim you recreant from our league
Of fun to-day. Why now fatigue
Your dear eyes longer with that book?
Come, talk with us, — I cannot brook
A verity to still conceal
In which you should some interest feel.
Attentively now hear, and know,
Sure as the days that come and go,
That, of the students in these halls, —
The gentlemen of course — it falls,
Too, that we have some grand ones here,
Worthy your seeing — do not fear, —
All are gone mad to know the pale
And *spirituelle* Genevra Hale.
There's witchery in your eyes, they say, —
And even our stately president
To Madam Learned said one day,
To your nativity was lent
Some moonlight spell of field or wood,
You are so wondrous fair and good."
Genevra smiled, and the bright eyes
Indeed had witchery deep and wise,

Born of rich thoughts and sympathies
And all-unsullied truth. "Most kind,"
She said, "are they, if not most blind.
I thank them — thank you all, and try,
When in my power, to justify
Myself from the arraigning skill
Of merry Celia. Bear you still
With dullness, but my friendship trust,
In doing this you will be just."

Her fallen pencil and a folding
Of paper from the mullion molding
Were gathered with no care to haste
As if to linger were time's waste;
But, when the cheerful talk renewed,
The topic dresses elegant
Worn by a bright belle at Nahant,
She glided from the hall, and stood
Erelong in a high balcony
Above the elm-trees, where the glee
Of giddy swingers from below
Was heard, not heeded, while with slow
Attentive care she turned, and read
The fourth book of the Paradise
Seen with imagination's eyes
By old time's true-souled Milton. Fled,
As the deep twilight veiled the page,
Was, for Genevra, this dim age,
While musings thronged her graceful head
Of Eve, and grand old Adam, long since dead.

SUMMER.

A BENISON of peace doth pass
Over the world to-day,
It waves along the meadow grass,
Hallows the free bird's lay.

From azure deeps of heaven it beams,
And, peace, the hills reply, —
The soft white cloudlets, like our dreams,
Hover in peace on high.

Uplifted forest tops of green
Seem hymning of the blest,
While on the far lake's glassy sheen
The sails, like white souls, rest.

God's peace breathes o'er our precious dead
Where gentle shadows lie, —
"'T is not," the deep voice oft has said,
"The worst of ills to die."

VACATION.

THE summer winds are singing
Sweet and low — soft and low;
My thoughts like tribute bringing,
Calmly flow — grateful flow.

The summer winds touch lightly
On the sea — o'er the sea, —
A thousand smiles flash brightly
Upward free — clear and free.

The aspen's light leaves flutter
Quick with joy — wild with joy;
Their shadows fleck my shutter
Gayly coy — fair and coy.

O summer wind, soft straying
Near and far — here and far,
I know the things you 're saying, —
Dear they are — grand they are.

"Kiss the sweet air," * my spirit,
Soothed and still — glad and still, —
Life, Life, thou dost inherit,
Feel its thrill — know its thrill!

A MEMORY.

Upon a gliding deck the artist stood,
And slow before him passed a beauteous scene, —
A high cathedral shade of forest green
With stately columns, seemed in hermit mood

* "Kiss the sweet air, and worship God, who fills it." — *Hindu Saying.*

Advancing from the shore its saintly rood, —
Its walls a light and magical soft screen
Of vines and summer leaves, while intervene
Dark arch, and shrine, and cloister, round which brood
The spells that hush with blessing. And before
That dreamlike fane of oracles low played
The sunbright water, rippling to the shore,
On whitened pebbles like fair ivory keys.
Ah, God! such harmonies alone are made
For worshipers who wait on bended knees.

ST. PAUL'S GROVE — VESPERS.

Sacred the scene, when the slant sunbeams fall
Along the columns through the oak-trees tall,
And to thy eastern front, beloved Hall,
The bright lake signals with its witching charm;
While all the whispering leaves around us move
Like famed Dodona's, — or, with glad alarm
As if they knew the might of living hearts
Had set them all pulsating. We must love
With truth which ne'er, go where we will, departs
The deep-toned memories, that, stirring all
Within to life, to toil, to strength, forever call
With cadence clear and sweet from our far forest Hall.

THE DEAD TREE.

I saw it with leafy honors crowned
By a crystal streamlet's side,
And its long fair boughs in their graceful sway
Stooped down to the gentle tide.

I lingered once beneath its shade
At the noon of a summer day;
When youth's clear pulse through my temples beat
In its swift and joyous way.

And busy thought of my questioning brain
Went out on restless wing
To the unknown's far and shoreless waves
Some tidings thence to bring.

Blest, blest, and beautiful seemed they all —
Green earth, and the holy sky,
And soul with its wondrous, fearful gifts,
And doom of mystery.

Years passed, from distant stranger scenes
I came with a colder brow,
But, by nature's altars wreathed and pure
My spirit still could bow.

The crystal stream on its winding way
My footsteps traced once more,

While a dim sweet thought of other days
Led softly on before.

I saw the emerald shore anew
Hold the laughing waves to rest
For a moment charmed and placidly
In its violet-scented breast.

And there far down in the stillness glassed,
All riven, bleak, and gray,
Was a giant form that frowned above,
Though lit by the summer's ray.

Then a mist came over the sunbeam's light,
The breeze passed chillingly,
And something mourned within my heart —
But not for the blighted tree.

A vision came with a pallid brow
And stood beside me there,
With pride-wreathed lips, and a clear dark eye,
Away — 't was a thing of air!

Yet a being like it on earth once dwelt,
With mien thus high and cold;
But the valley's clods press heavily
And mute o'er the spoils they hold.

A deep pall covered the wasted form,
A deeper the passing soul, —

A name that stands like the gray sad tree
Was the proud man's earthly goal.

SONNETS.

O MIND OF MAN, BE HUMBLE.

O MIND of man, be humble; for thy themes
Thou piercest as but Deity should dare,
Nor dread unmeasured spaces beyond air,
Nor years half infinite can bound thy dreams;
Yet, while from farthest star the raveled beams
Of vibrant light their tidings to thee bear,
Filling thy arrogant thought with new and rare
Of learning's boastful claim, it well beseems
Thou shouldst remember still how little tossed
By thy adventurous prow is the vast main
Of silent mystery, remember they,
Esteemed as most triumphant to have crossed
All dimness into truth, have soon from vain
Weak moorings drifted, — bend thee still, and pray.

FRIEND OF MY FIRESIDE.

FRIEND of my fireside, home, and heart, whose gift
Of crystal clear and analytic thought
A teaching, prized and true, to me has brought, —
Oh, may one shadow from thy spirit drift!

Oh, may one brightness o'er thy life uplift
Its beamy wings, filling the soulless naught
Which endless cold philosophies have wrought
With an all-cheering Presence! through some rift
Of time's cloud-curtain dare to fix thy gaze,
And with the lens of faith's grand telescope
Watch patiently until new, wondrous rays,
Across the dark slow stealing, light thy hope, —
And soon, serenely shining from afar,
The deathless splendors of thy Morning Star.

IMPROMPTU THOUGHTS AND WORDS.

"I dare not be a coward with my lips
Who dare to question all things in my soul.
I claim the right of knowing whom I serve,
Else is my service idle. He that asks
My homage asks it from a reasoning soul."

"We demand
To know Him first, then trust Him, and then love
When we have found Him worthy of our love,
Tried by our own poor hearts, and not before."

Thou man of science and of wit,
What pleasure can we find
Though dark-winged birds of thought shall flit
Out from their cage, the mind?

If there 's no God, 't is vain to brand
His name for good undone, —

He cannot come and fawning stand
To wait our favor won.

If there 's a God who rules the skies
And sends the sunbeam's light,
His power and wisdom will suffice —
We need not guide Him right.

He never will before the bar
Of swollen pride confess
That He has erred about a star
And blundered in the mess

Of whirling fire and awful void
Where earth, an atom, hung,
Prates boldly of his fame destroyed
Since chirping insects * sung.

No lowly, reverent mind in vain
Looks to the heights above,
Nor "spells in syllables of pain"
All we may know of Love.

* "The inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers."

THANKSGIVING.

GIVE thanks for these: the soft blue sky
With fleecy cloudlets fair;
And for soft airs that linger by
Nor breathe of doubt and care; —

Thanks for the fresh green spring-time leaves
This sweetest morn of May,
And that no sorrow inly grieves
We could not bear to-day; —

Thanks for the aspen's quivering grace,
The elm-tree's stately height;
While all the flushing charm has place
Of orchards gladly bright; —

Thanks for the quiet forest shade
And sunny flash of waves; —
Thanks for a still heart, calmly rayed
With trust that cheers and saves!

A MOOD.

YE winds that come and go
With dreary, dreamy flow,
Dully I muse to know,
Wherefore?

Ye flowers that live to die
Like thoughts too glad and high,
I ask with fruitless sigh,
Wherefore?

Bright clouds that speed amain
Like dreams we dream in vain,
We cry from desert pain,
Wherefore?

HUMMING-BIRD, I WONDER.

Humming-bird, I wonder
Can thy quivering wing rest?
What sweet blossoms under
Hides thy peaceful spring nest?

Humming-bird, I wonder
Can a spirit find rest —
Hushed from terror's thunder,
Is there yet a kind nest?

Humming-bird, I wonder
Where 's thy tiny thought tossed,
Atoms small asunder
Far, and all unsought, lost?

HOPING AGAINST HOPE.

Song-bird of early spring,
Forget not thou to sing,
Earth has grown old with care,
Faint hope seems half despair, —
O might we hear
Full notes of joy and praise
From all life's common ways
Outringing clear!

Sickness of hope deferred
Falls o'er man's thought and word, —
Send, send some voice of cheer,
Bird, poet, saint, or seer,
Great King divine, —
Some message grand and true,
Wakening to life anew
This world of Thine!

POETIC DREAMS.

Busy dreams that will be dreamed,
Heaven-fair and rainbow-gleamed,
Have ye made your promise sure?
Have ye charmed the heart-life pure?
To the true heights is your lure,

Dreams, O dreams that seemed divine,
Throbbing, fading dreams of mine?

ALONE.

KNOWEST thou what this word meaneth,
The loneness of the soul
That moves divorced and silent
Nor would that aught control
In broadened ways to lead it
Far from a given goal?

Canst thou bear the heavy silence,
When heavier griefs oppress,
Of blank, unanswering midnight
When clouds no ray confess,
And but the dim boughs waving
Keep time to consciousness?

Canst thou be alone with the distance
Stretched from star to burning star
Through the awful voids and spaces —
Alone with the near and far —
Alone with the whirling terror
Of being's freighted car?

Alone with mystery's problem,
Here and afar outspread,

Which slow Truth ponders over
Nor dares to say, "'t is read," —
Alone with the now and the endless,
The living and the dead?

Alone with thought and feeling
No mortal can help us bear —
Alone with trembling and reeling
In the arms of black despair, —
Alone with God, and kneeling? —
Peace cometh heavenly fair.

WELCOME, O SUN!

NIGHT has been with us, night so cold
We half forgot the sunshine gold
Could kindle, feebly asked, if light
Were ever more than darkness . . . Bright
Thou comest in the flushing east,
Great Bridegroom, for thy wedding feast, —
Welcome, true Sun!

ASPEN FLUTTERING SOFT AND LOW.

ASPEN whispering soft and low,
What thou meanest I would know; —
Dost thou kiss the summer air?

Dost thou feel that God is there?
Is thy worship like our prayer?

Aspen, aspen! blest thou art, —
No wild, aching, burning heart
Mars thy gladness, dims thy light, —
Aspen, kiss the sunbeams bright,
Clap thy hands in joy's pure might!

PRAYER.

God of the night and all its majesty,
Clouds, and strange whispery winds, and burning stars,
To Thee I call. A dimmed yet quenchless spark
Of thy own gift of being seeks its source.

God of the lightnings, which with blazonry
Most wonderful and the triumphant rolling
Of swift-wheeled chariots are passing now,
To Thee I call — to Thee from out the deeps,
Where sad maternal earth all vainly pours
The faint sweet odor of her fading flowers
And her low, mournful melody of tone
On the unresting sense of agony.
To Thee, to Thee I call; for Thou alone
Who dost command the lightnings, and they come,
Spreading their flame-bright pinions to perform

Thy mandates, — Thou alone canst send from far
Along the turbulent waves of human thought
Light's silver track, and speak the weariness
Of wrong and vain life-questionings to rest.

God of my soul, who knowest its aching fear
And voiceless heavenward thirstings, bend, oh bend,
From thy unseen and awful grandeur now;
And let that kingly hand, whose thrilling touch
Gave more than life to Judah's leper, rest
Its hallowing blest burden here — even here,
On head and heart!

August 27, 1882.

SONNETS TO LONGFELLOW, 1880.

AFTER READING "ULTIMA THULE."

I.

MAGICIAN of sweet song, thy soft notes swell
Along the evening zephyrs, — wilt thou spurn
The earnest friend whose listening ear shall turn
Won by each murmur of thy clear-toned shell,
Whose music charmed, as words but faintly tell,
My youthful homage, if I now discern
Thy own plain lesson, — though I would not learn —

Life's deepening pathos? Yes, I read too well, —
Crowned poet, thou wouldst lay thy laurels by
To stand once more tranced with the "holy night,"
And watch Spain's moon rise o'er Alhambra's height
With youth's warm splendor in thy kindling eye
And pulsing breast that never knew a sigh, —
Life's fervid glow a lamp of ceaseless light.

II.

"I know that my being has a purpose in the omniscience of my Creator." — *Outre Mer*, page 292.

Thou didst not err, O poet calm and true,
Heaven sealed the "purpose," and thy work is wrought
Nobly and purely; long the world has sought
And loved the stainless beauty. Hours that flew
Like carrier-doves, bearing some richly new
And peerless treasure from thy loving thought,
Were white-winged messengers; and they have caught
Immortal air, and floated on, even through
Immortal gates to meet God's welcome. Years!
Oh what are years? or ages? Far outflies
Them all a re-born spirit, — with no fears
Of time's slow wreck while grandly it may rise
In that Eternal Sun's life-giving rays
Which beam omnific o'er all countless days.

SEPTEMBER.

As a sweet nameless miracle
  Around life's common ways
Steals the enchantment to my soul
  Of still September days.

It rests upon the hills and sea,
  Hushes the forest leaves,
And for the restless heart of man
  A dream of childhood weaves.

It lifts the mourner's veil away
  That grief-shut eyes may see;
And soothed as by the lips of love,
  Long sorrows cease to be.

Whence comes the blest far-reaching power,
  Nameless by voice or word,
While flow'rets die, and faintly clear
  The cricket's note is heard?

'T is more than soft and silent air,
  More than the sunlight's charm, —
We feel a Presence at our side,
  Lean on a viewless arm.

And when the wintry ills we meet
  Earth's children all have met,
The spirit charmed with hope and trust
  Holds a sure amulet.

AUTUMNAL.

I.

Autumn's deep voice I listen now —
  A wind-voice deep and low, —
A lesson and a history
  Are in its measured flow.

A history of all the past,
  Life's blissful summer prime, —
O chant it, sweet mysterious voice,
  Thou worship-tone of time!

Tell of the hours to rapture given
  Of restless, kindling thought,
When youth's clear vision, earth and heaven
  To swell the rapture wrought.

Tell of the fireside hours with friends,
  The gifted, tried, and true,
Who crossed as angel guides our way,
  The blest, the treasured few.

And, more than all, tell thou of Him,
  The holy, heavenly Guest,

Whose presence through all brightness past
Beams centrally, the best.

Still bring, O rhythmic chronicler,
The memories we must love;
And with them breathe a prophecy
To lift our hope above.

II.

Brown Autumn's *lesson* too be learned,
So grand, so full, so clear, —
Great Father of the universe,
Give us the hearing ear.

It tells that winter storms must sweep
Across the smiling sky,
That souls through doubt and suffering pass
To clearer light on high.

The summer bloom, the verdant leaf,
The ripened fruit, we know
Each in its turn must sink to lie
Beneath a pall of snow;

But, lightly placed on every bough,
That waves afar or near,
In axil of each withered leaf
Spring's new-formed buds appear.

Thus we, though youth, and love, and life
Fade from us day by day,
Gaze on the swelling buds of hope
Beyond death's icy sway.

The autumn days move grandly on,
Numbering our years the while, —
Father on high, each, as they pass,
Stamp with approving smile.

SOMETHING UNEXPLAINED.

AUTUMN, thou hast strange power. Let me but hear
From the old mountains and the woodlands sere
The chanting chorus and the mystic chime
Of far-borne music in thy voice sublime,
And, lo, I am transfigured; backward roll
Upon me joy and strength. The kindling soul
Spurns off the hated shackles of dull years
And worn thoughts quivering oft from smiles to tears;
While in their place, a grand uplifting hope,
White as the cherubim, breaks clearly through
Life's shadows, and all fearlessly would ope
Heaven's gate, so full the wondrous trust, so new.

Read me this mystery, ye woods and vales,
Wakened anew by free and freshening gales,

Read me this mystery, thou azure sky, —
Nay, all-pervading Spirit, tell me why,
As sounds the sure knell of the rosy hours,
And fades the wreath from summer's radiant bowers,
While fair frail things around in ruin lie —
Why soars my joy on unseen wings so high?
'T is like the half-learned lesson of our faith,
The lesson deep and strange of life from death.
Oh, may we tread the last dark riverside,
To find of rushing light the smiling tide!
And as pale joys drop withered from the hand,
The soul exultant thus a conqueror stand!

DECEMBER.

He is come in his robe of ermine,
December, so stately and grand,
He chills the warm heart that would greet him,
And I touch not his freezing hand;

But sit in my pleasant chamber,
Where the pictured faces dear
Are all that look on me kindly,
Save the sovereign friend still near.

I sit and list to the surging
Of thought-waves that come and go

On the shore of my spirit's silence
With ever varying flow.

I question, fancy, and reason —
Most conclusive reasonings to me —
As I watch the snowflakes whirling
Through the plumes of our own pine-tree.

The pine with its pleasant story
Of the home-life that once was mine,
And which stands in ever green beauty
Of fadeless joys symbol and sign.

I think of two gentle maidens,
In the light of their earliest bloom,
Who kissed me and stept in the chariot
For a land beyond winter's gloom.

I think of a face calm and noble —
So pale on one desolate day, —
Lips that smiled like a glad spirit's smiling; —
Ah, me! could they pass away!

December is come in his ermine,
December so rayless and cold,
But for one thing how dearly we love it —
The story by shepherds once told!

When the star over Bethlehem beaming
Joined the heavenly chorus who sing,

"Peace on earth and good tidings
To life's weary millions we bring."

SUMMER IS COMING.

THE March winds are sweeping
In triumph around, —
Swelling and leaping,
The waves of sound
Dash on in their gladness
Worn thoughts to beguile,
For winter and sadness
Shall vanish awhile.

On, on, goes the greeting,
Swift, southern, and warm,
Wild harmonies meeting
In mystical charm;
Glad voices seem blending
With music once dear,
To waiting hearts sending
A message of cheer.

I dreamily listen,
And hopes full of joy,
Like ocean-pearls glisten,
Which naught shall destroy.

Yes, summer is coming —
The flute-tones prevail
Over rushing and booming,
The pride of the gale.

Far opens the vista
Of beauty once more,
Through garlands, the misty
Old mountains, the shore.
Glad welcome! Life-dreamer,
Thy fears all unlearn,
And summer, soul-summer,
Return, return!

THE WINGED VISITOR.

Cara, cara, cara, cara!
The song comes through the orchard leaves,
It clearly swells by the cottage eaves.
Listen, O silent heart that grieves —
Cara, carissima, cara.

A thing of joy for earth too bright
Awakes the ear, and charms the sight,
Singing with ever new delight,
Cara, cara, cara, cara,
Cara, carissima, cara.

The bright bird caged beside the wall
Quivers with joy in his narrow hall;
The stranger lingers with soft, sweet call,
Cara, cara, cara, cara!

Like all fair things of earth and sky,
The flame-bird spread his wings to fly,
And his song, like a faithless lover's sigh,
Passed on, carissima cara!

THE MAIDENHAIR FERN.

It lay beside my path, a withered thing
Tangled with wood-bark which some lowly home
Claims for its winter hearth-fire; but while roam
My thoughts regretfully that time should bring
Beauty thus delicate to perishing,
The fairy leaflets gather hues of chrome
And emerald, and, poising, light as foam
On stem of silken jet, they seem to swing
With breeze-touch of their native wilds once more.
Around me come all dewy woodland dreams, —
Brooks gurgle through their mosses, falling o'er
Low mimic ledges, light empyreal beams
Through the high-clustering leaves; and clearly rings
Afar the Gloria a lone thrush sings.

FOREST MUSINGS.

Welcome as rest, O voices, calmly calling
To my glad heart that answers to your calls!
Nature's deep music on my ear is falling,
Wavering through summer leaves the sunlight falls.

I hear once more the wind's low murmurous surging
Through the far aisles of ancient forests borne, —
Wakening from dust long-buried thoughts are urging,
Live, act, thy life complete, thou spirit worn.

Each forest tree, each bough a work beginning
By its firm growth, the greater and the less,
Some good for future years is slowly winning,
The power at last to shelter and to bless.

Shall man, then, man, the sovereign and the living,
Creature of hopes and dreams, resign the trust,
The right, the joy, the sacredness of giving,
And listless, motiveless, pass on to dust?

Life, human life, thou thing too darkly pondered!
Poor human breasts heave not with shunless woe;
Soul, exiled soul, from a far bright hope wandered,
Its haunting melodies still round thee flow.

List! the lone forest wind, now widely rushing,
With tone oracular, arrests my ear,
As if, the mind's chaotic tumults hushing,
It breathed the mysteries we pine to hear.

Oh, does it not? As the low hymn of sadness
Mourns wreck on wreck along life's stormy coast,
So in the notes of grand and solemn gladness
The listening spirit learns, all is not lost.

WOOD VIOLETS.

SAINTLY sweet the violets hide
Moss the greenest close beside, —
Sunlight stealing like love's bliss
To them with a dainty kiss.

EPITHALAMIUM.

LOVELY lady, gentle bride,
Thou art floating over the tide, —
Not a single thought of sorrow,
Only of a glad to-morrow.
Dark and deep beneath the wave, —
Laughing, sparkling ripples lave
By the yacht's low wavering side,
Cheerfully greeting as they glide.

Gentle lady, beauteous girl,
With the lightly-waving curl,
And the brown and tender eyes
Where the soul's pure mystery lies,
Lovely form and sweet round arm, —
Kind heaven keep thee from all harm!
One of matchless manly grace
Heeds thy changing wish or face —
Ah! I know why thou and he
Sought this lonely hour with me,
Thoughts ye had which none must share,
Joys which silence makes more fair.

Lovely lady, graceful bride,
Floating away with floating tide,
Thoughts which follow thee, floating, now,
Meeting eyes of thine, a brow
From which veiling crape went back
In our swift and breezy track
May return to thee, and then
Memory light will show thee when
Love's dear choice with me would stay,
Caring, dreaming not to stray.
Go, my heart's kiss floats to you,
Dear one, loving, lovely, true.

Gentle lady, lovely bride,
Far away with veering tide,
Heart that kissed you hear it say,

One there is whose Sovereign sway
Claims us, voyagers o'er life's tide,
Claims the chosen by our side.
Should death's shadowy sail appear,
Dim the sunlight now so dear,
May Divinity o'er thee shine,
Holiest Life with thine entwine;
May the arm of Him who saith,
"I have keys of the grave and death,"
Shield thee still through life's clear even,
Floating onward to thy heaven.

A BRIDAL MUSING.

O FAIREST, best-beloved, dare not dream
That thou canst be an absolute supply
Of the soul's craving, or canst hush the cry
For pure ideals by the softened gleam
That plays in sweet enchantment full, supreme,
About thee; yet, shall love regretful sigh,
And to some cavern depth of sorrow fly,
Lost the proud sun, and scorned the moonlight's beam?

Nay, rather love ye truly, friends, and be
The mutual bond your mutual need of love.
Wait calmly till life's mystery is wrought
To clearness, — some new morning each may see

The kind ones who around us daily move,
Retouched of heaven, are all that fancy sought.

WEDDED LOVE.

It is no dream
  Which time dispels,
  Like sounds of bells
That dying seem, —
  This dual sweet dependence,
  This mystic glad transcendence,
Earth's heaven-lent gleam.

GENEVRA'S FRIEND.

"THE SMILE OF THE SEA."

The smile of the sea, the smile of the sea,
Showing how gentle God's greatness can be!
Walks He not the sea pavement in splendor to-
  night,
With diamonds new-covered his footprints of light?
Hark, the ripples play softly and musical now,
'Neath the hush of his hand, and the calm of his
  brow.

The smile of the sea, the smile of the sea!
Such smile on the soul-deeps of being may be;

Through sealight and starlight with cleaving prow
Westward the Parthia is passing now.

Along the hushed billows may diamond light stream,
Across the lone vastness may starry hopes beam;
And the ripples play softly in musical flow
With the vastness around, and the deepness below.

Through sealight and starlight onward passed
The gallant ship; from the tall white mast
Scarce wavered a pennon, but rubies of fire
Fell back in the wavelets to expire.
Through sealight and moonlight with cleaving prow
Westward the Parthia is passing now.

I.

Enthroned in silvery, starry state,
Where courtier moonbeams kneel and wait,
Between the sky and gleaming sea,
Were two rare beings made to be
Crowned with that night's pure majesty.
Alike they were, — to poet's dream,
There in the brightness they might seem
To be that fabled immortal pair,
Woman and angel whose love could dare
To be immortal yet exiled,
Away from heaven though undefiled.
Each lip had curves of kindred thought,
Each eye its light from truth had caught,
Each full white brow wore its graceful hair
Alike in hue; but, softly fair

In loosened rings hers floating lay,
His carelessly was massed away.
Alike they were though kindred none,
But in the shadow and the sun
One year gone by, their ways had crossed.
Two stranger parties travel-tost
From the same land, as travelers meet
Had met, and wandered on, where street
Or palace, art, or ruin hoar,
Or aught of mountain, river, shore
Seemed fair or worthy; and not strange
To any, as they pass and change,
One party's regnant star and pride
To find in lingering spell beside
The brightness, the white Lyra ray
Of all the other. If some stay
Of cherished hope were turned aside
From other lives, all knew to hide
Such truth's unwelcome evidence.
Unmarred by pain and brightly thence
Passed by for fair Genevra Hale
And Maurice Hayne Catesby one
True, glorious summer, rarely known
To earth's most favored annals. Vale
And hill where echo low the wail
And triumph of past centuries
Had grown familiar; and with eyes
Gentle and studious they looked
On work of hands to ashes passed,

Despite the haughty souls that brooked
No thought more low, than, at the last,
An immortality. Still, bright,
As two fair rivers in the light
Flow in one channel side by side,
Mingling pure thought-waves, tide with tide,
Passed they, until to each were known
Their mutual tastes, each spirit tone.
Standing before some statue rare,
Or master's living canvas, where
With nameless skill were flashing out
Meanings we worship, such as dart
With truth and nature through the heart,
Proving beyond all pause for doubt
What genius can do, they but raised
Their meeting eyes, and words that praised
Were needless. Had Catesby gazed
Then daringly into those eyes
Of Psyche-like, sweet witcheries,
Heard day by day that Psyche tone
Thrill low and deep, and with his own,
As favored escort purely may
To aid where steepness mars the way,
Touched that fair, womanly white hand,
Whose grace and beauty did command
A spirit language pure and bland, —
Yet heard no whispers such as steal
Through manly hearts and bid them feel
Love's gentle presence without spot
Should linger near? — believe it not.

It was with purpose fixed and true
Maurice Catesby gently drew
Genevra to the deck that night,
And wandered slowly, half in light,
Half in the awning's twilight shade,
Till the last loiterer's parting made
A solitude as true, as fair
As anchorite would seek for prayer.

'T was not an hour for thronging words,
For plan or thought that overgirds
And reins to use ambition's might
For battlefields of wrong and right.
Well had Genevra seen and known
Maurice Catesby was not one
Of loiterers vain in foreign lands
Dropping waste time with idle hands;
Some acts to do, some words to speak
In his land's language and her cause
To mold her destiny or laws,
She felt there were, and these not weak;
But other thoughts ascend to-night.
Heart true as stars, soul ocean bright,
With the approving heaven above,
His few deep words ask answering love.

Graceful and pure Genevra's hand
Lay on his arm, — to close the band
The other rose as pure, as fair,

And they were clasped in moonlight there, —
Yet, in her aspect and her eyes,
Which watched the gleaming ocean far
In which eve's low descending star
Must sink while her clear brightness dies,
A questioning lay. That questioning crossed, —
Not deeps of pain by passion tossed,
But the still measurements of thought
To Him whom earnest minds are taught
To hold by an unwavering trust
As the Creative One who must
Guide where He made, since He is just.

As sacred things his joy to be
Maurice enclasped most reverently
Those clinging hands, and bent to place
On the sweet, silent, dreamy face
The pleading kiss of hopefulness
Which still its hope must half repress;
But, turning with an earnest grace,
Yet playfully, she said, "Not so, —
My Prince, my Maurice, champion knight
Of all things worthy, good, and bright,
You need not this my thoughts to know.
The mountain shepherd's lips may kiss
His smiling shepherdess, and this
Is well to bind their humble vow,
So peaceful and so light; but thou

And I, if love indeed be true,
Must bear with us a joy which, too,
Has wounding. Sweet the joy to feel
The mystery around us steal, —
The certainty that boldest hearts
Can smile on vassalage. Departs
For us the doubt that tortures, now,
And for all future. I affirm,
Knowing eternity its term,
To thee my fealty, — yes, bow
Thy listening ear — let the words rest
In memory's tablet full-impressed.
God's name is first — thine second — both
Live in my soul as being doth.
Still, Maurice, still, we will not walk
Together, as they do who talk
And breathe of the same air — too near
To know each other. Souls revere
That which doth beam apart, afar, —
Not glorious were the morning star
Plucked from its home of grandeur. Thou,
My star, I must not see thee bow
From thy true place of shining. As
Thy life uplifts all grandly white,
Mine shall wear pearls and chrysolite,
Diamond, and sunlight's pure topaz.
Thou hast true purposes, — a thought
For me too rises — more and more
Takes outlines which must be traced o'er,

And with all varied hues inwrought
Of beauty, truth, and gladness. We
May each in each forever see
An inspiration, — let this be."

"Alas, Genevra, can the heart
Bear this of which you speak? No art
Is there the growth to disentwine
Of tendrils sensitive and fine
Clasping, entangled, as we own
Our two loves have together grown.
No, no; thine must not be the hand
To rend, to ruin; and I stand
My strength but pain before the thought,
I have no power to yield thee. Ought
My summer dream to end but thus?"

"No. Maurice, yield me not. For us, —
Dost thou not see? the bridal 's past,
Have I not spoken words none speak
Even at the altar? Wouldst thou seek
For other vows than those thou hast
Already? This poor earthly life
Is but a question of some strife
Toward noble ends for a brief space
Of years or days, — then face to face
We meet transfigured, with no blight
Of memories to mar our light."

Silent Catesby stood, and thought
Over his fine, still features wrought
Such magic that Genevra's eye
Turned not from gazing on the high
Proud study of that form and face
Which time no more from memory can displace.

At last he spoke, and very low
And strange the utterance, and slow.

"But from cold marble is the gleam
Across thy words, no summer beam
Of love's own tenderness that needs
An answering love, and daily feeds
Its life with it. Genevra Hale,
Must I believe that phantom thing
Has mocked me which with frantic wail
Keats tells of, high and glittering
In all her matchless might to snare
The heart she saves not from despair?"
With changeless brow her hand once more
He sought, it was so fair, and wore
On one white finger a rich ring
Of sapphires, which to fancy bring
Heaven's blue and truth. But lingering
To check her voice's trembling throb
Genevra spoke; — she would not rob
A tried heart of its right to know
Her less than marble, more than snow.

"Maurice, to thee alone this hand
Is given. No other shall demand
Nor touch thy guarded claim, — these tears
Give answer to distrustful fears.
Doubt not pain which is mine to speak,
With heart now grown too sadly weak,
The words, we part, — we part to-night,
Nor meet till in eternal light.
If love is spirit-born, it needs no sigh —
Must live; if not, let the false vision fly.
Thou canst be grand, my Maurice, love
As souls and God do; time shall prove
The moonbeams on thy brow are not more white
Than love that dares past death triumphant flight."

Maurice had watched with searching eye
Her face; he spoke half haughtily:

"Be mine, proud girl, in thy own way;
I cannot doubt thy truth, — yet stay —
One moment now — I claim you here
Close to my heart. A language clear
It has — of such dread meaning, thou
Wilt not hold lightly the strange vow
By which thy troth is surely given
For life and death, for earth and heaven."

Faintly but firm Genevra drew
Back from his circling arm, and grew

Whiter than he though both were pale, —
What might words spoken then avail?
She glided from his side away.

He stood a statue stern and cold,
The night-breeze curious and bold
Whispered in vain, — in morning's gray
The Parthia at her moorings lay.
With gathered strength and calmly then
He passed back to the world of men.

II.

GENEVRA'S HOME.

Enter this library. The gleam
Is everywhere, the sunlike beam
Of golden beauty from the rich
Dark inlaid cases; and in niche
Between them glow some gems the knee
Of artist love must own to be
Shrine for its worship, — marbles fair
From Italy, and canvas rare
And wonderful. A mirror wall
Beyond doubles the light and all
The far perspective, its extremes,
The mirrored and the true, each seems
A fairy-like still garden place,

With avenue and gleaming vase
Flower-laden; while beneath the arch
Of festooned laces where the larch
Without just meets the lattice vines
A chair of quaint old carving twines
Its simulated flowers around
The cushion where the head reclines
And delicate and thoughtful face
Of one, the beautiful. A sound
Of gurgling water, in soft race
Of fountain currents, fills the air
Of evening with low music there.

The still sweet dreamy eyes, the pearl
Of forehead, and the chestnut curl,
The slender nestling hands so fair
Amid their laces old and rare,
The gracefulness of robe and form,
The attitude, itself a charm,
The nameless something, — spirit tone
Of a divineness all her own,
To me restore, and to my tale
The presence of Genevra Hale.
Yet twelve full years have passed away,
Twelve slow-paced years of night and day,
Years which might bring to others blight
But dared not touch that brow of light.

Nature is partial, showering oft
All gifts of sweetness and of grace,

All beauty of the mind and face
On one her petted favorite;
But then the creature is so bright,
With pride unbraced, with helmet doffed,
One gift away we would not take,
But say "'T is well!" for love's own sake.

Changed is the evening into night, —
Genevra stands beneath the light
Of the clear lustres which reveal
A little sadness that will steal
Up all unbidden from the heart
Forgetting that it should depart;
And — yes — that hand is slight to frailness
And like wan moonbeams in its paleness, —
It holds a letter. One short page
The letter is, yet heritage
Of diamond or of golden store
Named in some dear friend's will
Was ne'er so tenderly scanned o'er,
With tears so bright and still.
'T was gently on the marble laid
Where the warm light most clearly played;
And with a slow and thoughtful pace,
Dear memories brightening in her face,
Genevra crossed the tufted floor,
Turned and passed gently as before,
Till starting with some quickened thought,
A white leaf from her desk was brought,

And, kneeling on a footstool near
The table, gleaming, white, and clear,
She by the letter traced its mate,
Or that which seemed a duplicate ;
Yet thus one read — the other should
Have been its answer. If we could
Throw all the lights and shades of thought
Into some language newly taught,
It were not vain to lift a pen
Or hope to mold the form again
Of inmost beauty. None may deem
He can read clearly things that seem
Most clearly written, — there is still,
Unwritten, truer, that whose will
No word-shaped utterance can fulfil.

MAURICE TO GENEVRA.

I CALL thee mine, Genevra, and each year
  Lived in a world where living still art thou,
  Lived with but memory light from thy pure brow, —
Each year with scars of conflict, scorning fear,
A pale-lipped messenger, now calls thee near.
  Shall they all vainly plead, and whisper how
  With silenced pride to thee I bade them bow,
Nor shunned my vassalage to one so dear ?

Is not my life-work rounded to thy will?
Have not my days, my nights, been toiling spent?
Couldst thou smile on my task, upclimbing still?
Nay, after toil a kind rest should be lent.

My weary way grows dim with gathering mist, —
Oh, end this exile, sweet transcendentalist!

GENEVRA TO MAURICE.

Thou dost remember, Maurice, that one night,
Most lovely that we ever saw, or dreamed,
When stars above us and below us beamed,
Yet more than theirs, and clearer was our light, —
All else lost in a splendor passing sight.
That night of ocean stillness was redeemed
From earth and dust, and with hopes overgleamed
Clear in my breast as they were then, as white.

Yes, eagle, yes, thou hast soared proudly. I
From the low valley watched thy upward way
Forgetting that my wings all idly lay, —
I 'll plume them — gain thee yet — heaven grant I may!

If love is spirit-born, it needs no sigh —
Must live; if not, let the false vision fly.

On every breeze had passed the name
Dearer than all its growing fame,
While to Genevra ever came
Assurance full and blest that he
His own unsoiled nobility
Through every step had upward borne
Where sometimes "honor bright" grows worn.
And now again, and yet again
Rang out the clangor far and vain
Of popular applause for him
The eloquent young senator
Who asks no honors, will not dim
His clear soul with a falsehood, nor
His eye's true vision with gold dust;
But holds by virtue right to hold men's trust;
"And in the future cannot lie
One honored place for him too high."

'T was thus the people said, — but knew
No one that while the echoes grew
Fuller and vaster, he they praised
Was dying. A slow consciousness
Had stolen to his breast, and raised
Its voice till reason must confess
The sentence clear, death's fingers wait
Amidst the heart-strings — near is fate.
He heeded not the voice of fame
Far trumpeting, but questioning came, —
"Will she I love pause here and lay

Her hand on my cold forehead? Nay,
I could not die, though wrapped in dust,
Were she beside me, — her firm trust
In endless good and purpose high
Would find the rays which glorify."

Those few words for Genevra's reading,
A tender and an earnest pleading,
Had thus been written, but not all
The truth that wrapped him as a pall.
To touch of pity, surest art
Holding in sway a woman's heart,
He would not owe her presence dear
Which love won not to linger near.

She read the sonnet with a pain
Which, banished, would be felt again;
And though her answer had been traced
With shades of sadness all erased,
She rose her slow walk to renew
In thoughtful mood which ever grew
More and more troubled, and a doubt
She could not understand nor name
Sternly within her soul flashed out,
A something of contempt and blame.
Was it but selfishness controlled
The motives held as purest gold?
Had she dared mar the life of one
To her as to the heavens the sun

By the poor vanity forever
At height to seal the truth of love and lover?
Or, now did madness seize her thought,
Some folly steal the mind which ought
One fixed calm purpose to pursue
Life's given work to firmly do?

With light touch of a silver bell,
Scarce heard, so soft the summons fell,
A woman came — not old — but grave,
And by one glance you knew her brave
And wise and kindly. Gently passed
As if to one with deference met,
Genevra said, "It is the last,
The midnight hour, dear Margaret;
If you are weary I will let
That I would say pass till to-morrow, —
'T is something which may give you sorrow."

"Thy words cannot, my mistress dear,
Too late nor early be to hear
If hearing them can serve thee well —
Speak that even now thou hast to tell."

"Call me not mistress; thou art friend,
My mother's choice to still attend
Her orphaned daughter's earthly way, —
Now, dost thou love her wishes, say,
So well that thou wilt willing learn

To love — there may be no return —
A foreign home? This quiet grace
Of dreamy luxury I must change.
Some sight of rugged mountain range,
Some foreign wandering would displace
A dullness, which I greatly fear
Grows indolence, or very near
The same. Henceforth my life to give —
Not only take — thus truly live —
I would devote. Lake Leman, grand
Bright lake, and Alp-crowned Switzerland —
With these my soul may utterance dare —
My father breathed that altar-air,
Mother and Maurice too were there.
Soon shall I rise o'er doubt and fear,
Win back my childhood's vision clear, —
See nature as God's radiant throne, —
Hear a deep voice and bless its tone
In whispers of the evening breeze,
In rippling joy of summer seas.
In solemn hush of starry night
Brooding above the awful height
Of Alp or Jura I shall hear
A voice of hope, the strong, the clear, —
And joy, sublimely true as great,
Shall open still the half-closed pearly gate.

"I go, and soon, what dost thou say?
Come, come with me, my Margaret, pray!"

"Thine is my service, hold it true, —
It is the work I have to do."

"Thanks, Margaret! Now all is bright —
We sail by the White Star. Good-night."

TO MAURICE.

O PRICELESS friend afar, if thou hast thought
I have been wise and calm in loving thee,
It is that thou the pale face didst not see
A mirror showed me when my ear half caught
Thy coming footsteps, or but feigned it ought
To hear them. Can I tell why this should be?
Explain the pallid fear, — the ecstasy
Of love, which may to pain be overwrought?

As on some dizzy height I seem to stand
With splendor all around me, — while a tone,
A look, a thought, a breath, may break the wand
Of my enchantment, — and my fate command
A swift descent from the empyreal throne
Which now I proudly claim, through thee, my own.

III.

AT SEA.

Two travelers from the highest deck
Of a vast ocean palace gazed
On a strange pageantry upraised
Of sunset clouds, that wildly wreck
Their arch of dread magnificence
With ceaseless, towering changes; whence
Unfold stern forms of ruggedness,
Crags of aërial steeps which dress
Their peaks, torn sides, and restless edges
With earthlike, tawny gold, while ledges
As of some waiting avalanche
Lean menacingly forward, yet
Are glowing with dusk splendors met
Around their awfulness. "Most stanch
And brave, dear ladies, must ye be —
To-night some turbulence of sea
May come; some days of rocking blast
May follow, — such our ship has passed."
It was the captain standing near
With lifted hat and naught of fear.
Again he spoke. "This letter brought
And left in the last hour before
We sailed, by light-boat from the shore,
I render to the person sought."

THE LETTER.

When my bright lady reads these words of mine
The hand that writes them will be coffined, all
Be hushed between us while death's curtains fall.
Shall those dark curtains rise? and crystalline
Far dreams for which our restless wishes pine
With a deep-piercing splendor break our thrall,
Leading the way to their clear opal hall,
And joys no mockery our souls enshrine?
Ah! shall those curtains rise? revealing life
A calm majestic real, a new birth
Of being? or, shall end the fruitless strife,
Lost to our severed love both heaven and earth?

Her voice speaks not the answer, yet I trust
We wake transfigured from the envious dust.

. . . . . .

Rise, rise, wild waters of the deep!
Ye would but mock in placid sleep
The thoughts that, spurning all control,
Barriers of slow-built strength o'erroll;
Nor find below, around, above
Nor anywhere but pain of love, —
Fearful and lost yet precious thing —
Fearful in joy, in torturing!

Genevra turned and leaned to rest
Both arms on the stern guard, and pressed

Her face down there, the fixed eyes staring
With a strange, hungry look despairing
Far in the cold, green, heedless waves,
As wondering if below the caves
Are deep enough to bury thought,
Or if the ocean's pall is wrought
So well that it can hide the brain
From frenzy. All too vain, too vain
Thy cruel trust, O Maurice, in
The calm, still strength love could not win
To change its purpose! May it be
That letter was but musingly
Traced out in some unresting hour
Nor meant to wield such crushing power;
But found by stranger hands, was sealed
To tell a truth no more to be concealed?

SONNET OF PRAYER.

BEING of beings, thou whose sovereign name
We speak not, lest the all-unmeasured thought
Be mocked even by our reverence — Oh!
SOUGHT,
Wilt Thou be found? Shall pinions wounded, lame
And trembling, fold in peace beneath the flame
Of thy great glory? Yes, my life has caught
Some bright rays that consumed not, but were
fraught
With love and benediction. One, the same,

Thou ever art, to me the same, — oh! be.
Give me no blessing which Thou dost not bless;
Give me no treasure Thou hast not made dear,
Give me no love that is not loved of Thee, —
That wears not an unsullied loveliness
Which welcomed in thy presence may appear.

THE REFINER'S FIRE.

Oh, aching heart, be humble, — they are near
The solemn altar, and the pallid urn, —
The one with unextinguished flame to burn
Through all earth-dross till thou art spirit clear, —
The other where, like autumn leaves grown sere,
Proud joys have vanished that no more return
From night and silence. Wayward heart, now learn
In lowly watchfulness and sacred fear,
And searching might of the keen altar-fire
Life's meaning. In thy agony be strong;
For is not this thine own, thy true desire, —
The pain, the hallowing, asked and waited long
That thy pure love a diamond blaze may be
For the grand brow that knew Gethsemane?

Who ever lived, nor learned to know
His mark of birth, or soon, or late,

The shunless lineage stamp of fate,
The blazoned and escutcheoned sign
Of a long-drawn ancestral line, —
The monogram of woe?

SHADOWS AND LIGHT.

I LOOKED on a fading landscape
When its beauty all had fled,
When "the red leaves' bright mosaic"
Crushed brown beneath my tread.

I watched a sunset splendor, —
A gorgeous palace it seemed,
Which changed to dull, cold storm-cloud,
Where curtains of crimson had streamed.

I saw a glorious woman, —
Once fairer than morning light;
But the blight of time had reached her, —
She turned, and shunned my sight.

I marked the mournful meaning
Of her eye to thought still true,
And I knew that the inner blighting
Was more than eyes might view.

I sighed, "O Father in heaven, —
If thy wisdom had seen it so,

Better swift, than this weary dying,
Surrendered to living woe!"

Night came, and a grand old minster,
With cloisters shaded and still,
The moonlight asleep on the pavement,
I entered, and felt a slow thrill

As of music afar and enchanting,
Whose charm all the spirit compels, —
Not a word, not a breath stirs the silence,
Yet around the deep harmony swells.

The worn woman lowly was kneeling
With slender pale hands clasped in prayer,
While something — a heaven-wove mantle,
Lay o'er her transcendently fair.

Let autumn leaves fade as they wither,
Let night sunset's crimson infold, —
O Spirit undying within us,
Thou findest the sunset of gold!

"LORD, THAT OUR EYES MAY BE OPENED."

We are pleading, ever pleading,
Jesus, now, all else unheeding,
Prisoned hearts within us bleeding —
Open, Lord, our eyes!

Weary of our wayside blindness,
Coming in our groping blindness,
To thy heart of pitying kindness, —
Open, Lord, our eyes!

Notes of joy are softly pealing,
Thoughts of beauty o'er us stealing;
All our hope to Thee is kneeling,
Open, Lord, our eyes!

THE SPIRIT MOST WORTHY HIS CARE.

"A DREAM NOT ALL A DREAM."

Slow winged the calm gracious-browed angel,
His errand was easy and fair, —
Just to bring from the low-lying city
The spirit most worthy his care.

Warmly bright glowed the windows of churches,
White pinions furled close at their doors, —
Unseen and unguessed, the still angel
Passed over the tufted floors.

He heard many words, boldly spoken,
Of faith, consecration, and love;
Golden gifts were proclaimed for the altars,
Some talked of a treasure above.

The phylacteries widely were showing,
The Pharisee smiled on his own, —
White hands stole out from the ermine,
And silken robes softly shone.

Deep-veiled was the face of the angel —
No anger but sorrow he knew —
As away to a dim-lighted chamber
Unseen and unguessed he withdrew.

There he bent o'er a suffering woman
Whose racked thoughts in reverence bow, —
"I'm weary — so weary — oh, Jesus,
O blessed Christ, help me now!

"The children, poor darlings! are better —
Charlie, and Frank, and Louise,
And Carrie the dear little orphan
Who lay on the cold stones to freeze.

"They are better I know, for I held them
Each one as the fever burned on, —
They are saved, they are well, gracious heaven!
All well, and the pestilence gone.

"Now — yes, I will rest just a little —
No, hark — let me go, for I see
Another all parched with the fever —
Another they 're bringing to me!

"Whose head is this throbbing so wildly?
Whose eyes that now fade from the light?"
The angel flashed out all resplendent,
And darkness was banished that night.

Calm folded by white wings celestial
That gently and safely bear,
Mounts away with the deep-loving angel
The spirit most worthy his care.

LIFT UP THY LAMP.

Lift up thy lamp. Ask not if other light
Shines clearer, farther o'er the storm-lashed sea
Where freighted barks toss on in wildering night
And the safe waters of their haven flee.
What though abroad the night-winds chilling be?
Soon shall an icier cold around thee steal,
And thou, when sounds the death-hour's solemn peal
Mayest mourn unfinished work with fruitless plea.

Lift up thy lamp along life's wilderness, —
A world-forgotten, way-worn wanderer there
Sinks faintly down at last beneath the press
Of woes to strive no more against despair.
Lift up thy lamp, — its pale and quivering ray
May guide one soul out from a darkening way.

LIGHT-CROWNED.

From bases black and dread,
  From crags all rent and wild
The mountain lifts its head
  Sovereign, benignant, mild.

Our life may be uplift
  From caverns of despair,
And, cragged by sorrow's rift
  A crown-light still may wear.

THREE: OR, GENEVRA'S TOWER.

A JUNE MORNING.

Beautiful earth in thy robe of beams,
Girdled and sparkling with silver streams,
Wreathed and jeweled and crowned to-day,
Fair empress, we praise thee, accept the lay.
Glad *vivas* are sounding from forest and vale,
The rose brings thee fragrance, low music the gale.

The old mountains smile in their grandeur of rest,
And the sea far away like a joy-heaving breast
Throbs back a deep murmur of grateful replies
To the love that is beaming from halcyon skies.
All beauty seems perfect, all hearts are in tune,
This morning, rare morning of life-breathing June.

Beautiful earth! which God rules o'er, —
Beautiful heaven! where thought will soar
Through smiling dream-lands, which often grow
To clearer vistas where hope-lights glow, —
Beautiful love! which is but He,
Brightness of heaven, and earth, and sea!

I.

With musical and lulling sound
Lake Leman's waves lapsed in around
White pebbles and a rocky stair, —
One of twelve more that, rounding fair,
Rose to the highest, which spread wide
Its marble, bearing from each side
Two giant vase-like forms. Around them
Soft summer greenery waved, and crowned them.

Across a terrace pavement stood
An ancient tower in bowering wood
Of elm and larch trees. Often came
Forth from its portal deep the same
Pale lovely lady for her still
And musing walk behind the grille
Of the o'erhanging terrace. Days
Of rarest charm and southland rays
She passed down through the pleasant ward
Of vine-hung vases which kept guard
In sportive livery of a hold
That treasures naught but memories old.

Genevra stands upon the stair
In the clear June's delicious air,

And the pure face seems very fair,
And calm and trustful; but a cloud
Of mourning crape tells of the proud
And hermit thoughts, a shadowy ring,
That close around her spirit's weary wing.

The oars in grasp of two brown hands
Of a slight sunbrowned boy, with large,
Black, wistful eyes, a tiny barge
'Neath festooned awning floats away
Through sunbeams on the rippling play
Of waters. Bright above all lands
Art thou, Helvetia, — made sublime
With beauty. Ancient Chillon stands
And to the heart all-vainly speaks
Of sorrow, while the glad eye seeks
Afar, around, and riots still
In perfectness, — nor asks that time
Reveal another, newer clime
Its restless craving quest to fill.

There was a room in the old tower
Made beautiful by all the power
Of Margaret's untiring love,*
Whose care all other care above
Was this, that her dear lady know
No shadow on life's summer glow,

* Pages 67, 68.

No slightest dream of wish unmet,
No thought to seem as a regret.
While chiding the bewildered hour
That brought them to the strange old tower,
With crimson drapery and lace
She veiled the walls in dainty grace;
And, triple carpets covered o'er
The rudeness of the cold stone floor.

Beneath a window far embayed
Where least the deep roof dropped its shade,
Stood a round table; and a pile
Of even sheets, all neatly paged,
Written one side, and in a style
Peculiar but distinctly fair,
And all reversed from sight, lay there.
One little paper disengaged
Was swept as the light breezes move
To fall, the written side above;
And Margaret, who sat and wrought
Her netting, saw and quickly caught
Some words of troubled meaning. Long
Within her thought had hid away,
Hushed from all utterance day by day,
Unwelcome fears, the spectre throng
Haunting in all the silence still
Despite her utmost wish and will.
In vain she mused, "It cannot be —
My lady 's well — can I not see? —

Never so calm, so blest, so white, —
What Power could choose such life to blight?
And yet, and yet, her eye 's too bright,
Her cheek too beautiful and pure, —
Oh life, thou shouldst as love endure!

"'T is said that love is false and vain,
Light, fickle as the wandering breeze
That flies across the inconstant seas,
Falsest of all false dreams that pain
The soul which trusts their mockery.
Why lives it then though heard no more
Are voices loved, — when from before,
Behind, around, wakens no tone
To say the vanished are not *gone?*
Why lives it still when lip and eye
And whitest form we treasured so
Lie faded dust 'neath winter's snow?
Yes, I must weep, but will not sigh
For her, the loved of earth and heaven —
Oh, I must weep and ask not why!
All, all I dread, is written here,
She feels the truth as I the fear.
Something of a sweet sorrow, more
Of an upwelling and exhaustless store
Of living gladness she has given
In these dear lines — alas, how riven
From hope and faith — I only see
The future veiled all gloomily!"

Fast and unchecked the large tears swell,
On the white leaf they blistering fell
As Margaret bent down her head
Upon the paper in a dread
Abandonment, — as they can grieve
Who seldom weep — they who bereave
From pain the right to be expressed.

A light hand touched her silvered hair,
A loved low voice her ear addressed:
"Knows my dear Margaret how fair
This day has been, how soothing still,
How gladly peaceful? Never will,
I think, the Alps look out again
With such clear outline, and attain
Such heaven-lit beauty, — and the air
Was like a sacred kiss, — oh! dare
Be happy this triumphant day
Of God, in wondrous nature. . . . Nay,
My foolish sonnet thou hast read
Which farther than it ought has led
Thy kindly fears. To talk erewhile
I wish of all the future, but beguile
To-day sweet fancies. Let me try
These few words, whispered truthfully,
By your true ear, that I may know
If they hold rhythm with any thought,
If one deep cadence has been caught
Of meaning which through life must flow."

"GOD IS LOVE."

Great God, I knew thy charm,
Felt thy caressing arm
Along my childhood ways;
And sweet thoughts calm and coy
Uplifted into joy,
Grew bright as heaven beneath thy spirit rays.

Thy voice I, listening, heard
While the old forest stirred
And gladdened to thy might, —
While mellow thunders spoke,
And reverent silence woke
To echoing music with responsive night.

Great God, the guileless heart
Fears not thy face, — Thou art!
Thou art! Oh! seal us pure, —
Give childhood's blessing still, —
Thy wondrous vows fulfil,
Thy words of troth and truth, divine and sure.

. . . . . .

"There, on the cushions, I will talk, —
Nay, Margaret, aid me not to walk."

"I still am here, — but when I go
Dear Margaret, you alone must know

Mercy's sweet care. All that I find
Except some legacies, declined
Where none do need them, I have mind
To leave with you. Once more I say,
Care for the orphans; nor forget
Our strange boy Marcus, — is that way,
That look of yours, good Margaret,
A half formed frown whene'er his name
I speak? I know his genius towers
Not yet o'er question; but no blame
Is his if I misjudge his powers
And still advise a waste of hours
Within the studio. Slow toil
Is that of the great artist. Foil,
Sometimes, the spirit's fervid dreams
The colder hand; but worthy themes
May yet call forth some effort high
A master's touch inspiredly.
Aid Marcus well. If you had seen
The deep light come into his eyes
To-day, — the still thought-splendor rise
O'er all his features, while between
The green cliff shades, with pausing oar,
We gazed along the matchless shore
And up to the great mountains, — oh!
You never would again be slow
To own that wondrous meaning dwells,
Of which his life yet faintly tells
Behind those eyes' deep blackness."

"He
Is not a chosen one by me,"
Said Margaret, "yet do I trust
I can and will to *him* be just.
There is a canvas in the room
Where Marcus stays, but, in the gloom
And shadows that delight him, none
Could see its merits, — and, beside,
'T is turned against the wall. Alone
I hardly could uplift the wide
High frame. When it came here, and how,
He knows — shall I go call *him?* — now?"

"Wait still. I never yet have known
You, Margaret, a choice to own
But you a reason wise could give.
Severe you never are, till live
The faults to make you so, therefore
That which you know conceal no more.
Why strangely you so often use
Unneeded accents help me muse."

"Genevra, child, try now to bear
My folly while I must declare
Myself I fail to justify.
The truth is this, I ever fly
From things which are not as they seem;
Therefore the poet's lovely dream
I name a dream; and when I look
Upon the painted side of brown

Coarse canvas, — from a silent nook
Of — is it scorn? I see deep down
Through it to empty nothing. If,
Your Marcus Marcus is, — 't is well,
Albeit his vain thoughts should swell
Beyond his measure, to a cliff
From which he soon would tumble; but,
If that same name of Marcus cut
All truth with falsehood, until read
Another way; and if, new led,
We add some seven years more of age,
Than he has claimed, for your dark page, —
Nothing were left but this, to call
Him Marcia and a cheat. Here 's all
I wish to say." . . . "Speak, Margaret,
Speak still, — are given no reasons yet,
Only suspicions, — tell their cause
It is required by truth's plain laws."

"Well, when you came, weary and weak,
From Florence, and the winds were bleak
Across the Jura in late spring,
Please to remember that you stayed
At fair Vevey, I hastening
To build some fires that the cold shade
Of the old tower might soften, by
Their warmth. And also I would try
To let some southern sunshine in
Before your coming. Having passed

On through the vineyards, thus to win
My purpose, much fatigued at last
I crept slowly and silently
Up from the postern door to see
How seemed the air in that droll place
Hung like a bird's-nest from the wall —
Half up — half down — that I must call
Your dressing-room. Turning my face,
By chance I looked down through the small
And pretty arch, yonder where fall
The draperies; and, trust these eyes,
I saw, sitting exactly there,
And in that very crimson chair,
A princess-like proud lady. Wise
She looked as beautiful; but gazed
With eyes I would she ne'er had raised
Down on the floor most thoughtfully.
Her rich robe I could plainly see
Piled by her dainty-slippered feet;
And on her brow were jewels meet
For a king's wearing. On her breast
Flashed out an ancient stomacher
Of great pure diamonds. Shall the rest
Be told?" "Yes, all you know of her."

"She rose, and stood in stately height
Before this mirror; but no flight
Of vain thoughts passed across her face, —
Troubled despite her lofty grace.

I noted a bright wealth of curl
Piled high to, softly mingling, twirl
Among the jewels of her brow,
And soon — I see it clearly now —
That upward glance of mirrored eyes,
Black, black, and fixed as by surprise,
Which Marcus, *Marcus* all revealed.
Yes, Marcus, with a cheek as fair
Almost as yours, was standing there,
The thing he is to me unsealed.
I loved him not, yet well could trace
In all his ways and in his face
A gentle culture. Humble place
And lowly deferential grace
Were feigned so well it proved the same
From others he knew how to claim."

"What next was done?"

"I half forget —
Shame not your silly Margaret
Whose brain, bewildered swam with thought
Of pleasure far too dearly bought
By dwelling in a robber's hold,
As helpless victims helpless sold
To murder and a nameless grave
In our strange home this side the wave;
And all by this pretended boy
Who in his holiday may toy
With some chief criminal's base wealth
Whom he can ably serve by stealth.

When reasoning came for your defense,
A plan by which to extricate
You from all danger ere too late,
My lady of magnificence
Was gone. I did not hear her stir,
And now in truth I must aver
I know not when nor how she went;
For I most foolishly had bent
My head too low in trembling fears, —
Such weakness comes with coming years."

"It was, I think, no human form,"
Genevra said, "with currents warm
Of youthful blood, — quiet she seemed,
You said, as if she only dreamed
The past. There may be mysteries cold
Which we need not be overbold
To know, nor questioning seek, —
I would not this with us should speak."

"Nay, my Genevra, I must smile
If you with ghost-thoughts would beguile
Your clearer judgment. Let me say
Once more, 't was Marcus, not a fay
Nor wandering thing from other years
Revisiting its home of tears.
I say that she was Marcus, who, —
Listen, this very moment, too, —
Passes across the landing, high

Above the postern stairs, which try
His claim to ghostship and deny
That he, intangible, can move
Without a sound so far above
The safe and lowly common sod
Where mortal feet have ever trod.
To satisfy your latest doubt,
When you have dined, I 'll bring about
His coming here, — he is not slow
To do your pleasure — shall he show
To you the picture? If you ask
Of him — a not too pleasant task —
Some questions, he will answer true, —
None ever speak false words to you."

Upon an inlaid table fair
Soon had been placed with dainty care
A neat small service silver-bright,
But brief was the repast and light.
The tempting viands borne away,
Margaret came once more to say,
" At three o'clock young Marcus will,
If this your pleasure shall fulfil,
Bring in the painting. His desire
I speak that your eyes shall retire
From his poor canvas till so placed
That any merits may be traced
In their best light. This, he assures,
Some pleasure in the work secures."

Genevra turned with quiet smile
Her crimson chair to rest awhile
Beside a long low window, where
The soft and southward sunlit air
Waved the light leaf-boughs oft aside,
As dreamily to show, then hide
The azure waters, and the light
Of passing sails against the far
Empurpled mountains. Moments are
When life, however darkly wrought,
Becomes all-strangely overfraught
With something which we name again,
Despite long doubt, and dread, and pain,
That coldly mock, sweet happiness.
Dreams of the beautiful, excess
Of a glad consciousness that we
Have been, or, yet shall sometime be,
All we can wish, will brightly steal
Like truth around and make us feel
Life-sovereignty. Thus memory
And thought — those tides of being's sea —
Were swelling, filling the hushed soul
Of calm Genevra, and o'erroll
All sorrow. Each white distant sail
Seems like the welcome wing of peace
Hovering above some mind's release
To try a new, blest being, — each
May tell of gathered friends, and teach
That proud and prosperous hours must fail

Of their full rapture if unshared
By truest hearts who for us cared.

The trembling voice of Marcus spoke
Beside her ear, and quickly woke
Genevra from her revery, —
Yet he is gone. She can but see
A packet placed low at her feet,
And hear an earnest tone entreat.

"Please you, dear lady, to bid stay
Without even Margaret, while you say
I have dared far with hope to please
His love's elected."
To her knees,
Even as she might a pleading child,
Genevra took the packet, — and, smooth-filed
Beneath an ebony casket, found
Some papers which from all around
Claimed in abandonment her thought.

A pallor with deep sadness fraught
Stole to her features, and, as fail
The last slant sunbeams from the pale
Cold mountain tops, and in the room
A shadow crept like coming doom, —
Yet only twilight, she let fall
The papers, rose, lifted her all
Of hands and heart and streaming eyes

Up to the slowly-darkening skies, —
Then moved as if she knew not why,
Without a sound, without a sigh
Across the floor. . . . Quick her eye's light
Had kindled, fixed, unearthly bright
With rapturous proud joy; yet, low
As buried waters weirdly flow,
She murmured, "He is come, is come.
Maurice, my noble, my heart's home,
I have been cruel, selfish, base, —
Forgive it all, — have I not grieved
For your dear presence? Oh! believed
I must be. None of all my race
Has ever worn black falsehood's mark, —
Stay, Maurice, stay — ha, light is dark!"

Not all the papers had been read,
Her soul was dim with doubt and dread;
She knew not that a matchless art
Had shaped, though vainly for her heart,
A form all wondrous, lofty, pure,
Calm as a god no charm can lure.
She had stretched forth her pale fair hands
With pleading tenderness in vain
To a mere picture, but so plain,
So full the whole resemblance stands
She dreams, bewildered, it is he,
The lost one loved so loyally.

"Stay, Maurice, stay!" A torture cold
Grasped all her frame, a pain ne'er told,
The agony with which, estranged,
The crushed heart shrinks from love now changed.
A few faint backward steps were taken,
Yielded the strength too deeply shaken,
She sank down slowly on the floor
Silent and white, and felt no more.

When Marcus passed so soon away
And asked Genevra to betray
His work to her own thought alone,
He spoke in humble soothing tone
To Margaret, who waited still
Within an anteroom the will
Which might be spoken. "You were right,"
He said, "not erring was your sight,
Good Margaret. My idle play
Was truth. I, seen by you that day,
Was my true self; and in one hour
I go and leave the dear old tower
Where it was blest to linger. Peace
Is yours at last, and full release
From my unwelcome presence. You
Have borne with patience still and true
My vexing, — would you aid me well
But once to change this deep-blue shell
Of feigning for my traveling dress?"

With smiling and smooth gracefulness
Was raised the blue cloth cap to show, —
Poor captives held by cruel foe, —
The crushed and shining curls. "To know,"
Most gravely Margaret said, "I 'll go,
That when a fitting garb you wear
A woman's virtue will be there."

"Fear not, wise Margaret, I am one
You will not in the future own
With blushing cheek that you have served.
Wild, and too willful I may be,
But not yourself would sooner flee
Than I one action which has swerved
From honor true and lovely. Come,
Hasten me now to seek my home."
And Margaret went, with her own hands
Smoothed out the moist curls' silken bands,
And saw them dry in tendrils meet
Over white shoulders smooth and sweet;
She saw the brown cheeks fade away
To fair ones with a brilliant play
Of rose-like beauty on them, and,
As deftly she the soft lace band
Fastened beneath the dimpled chin,
Tears, gushed the sober eyes within;
And, kissing the bright youthful face,
She asked in silence that Heaven's grace
Might guard and bless the parting one, —
That in her life God's will be done.

Not falsely wandered Margaret's thought,
But, listening oft, she almost caught
Sound of the light and silver bell
Which gently to her ear could tell
Its quiet message. Evening fell,
And yet she vainly paused to hear
One sound to check her rising fear.
She sought the dressing-room, and there
Walked back and forth in restless care
Till she no more could try to bear
Her troubled thought, — but drew aside
The curtain that no more must hide
From her pained eyes the drooping form
Of her dear lady. . . . Utmost skill
Hour after hour was fruitless still
To fix the steady pulses warm ;
But half the reeling senses waken,
While thought the new pained form has taken.
Wildly Genevra grasped the hand
That soothed her forehead to demand,
"Say, did he spurn me, did he come
And shut my heart out from its home?
Yet I was true, true as the stars,
The night, the morning, and the sun, —
My soul was wedded. Are these bars
Iron, and cold, and dark, that run
Between my noble one and me?
I 'm dead or prisoned — Margaret, see! "

And Margaret gave an opiate,
Hushed her own tortured heart to wait
In seeming calm. Of all fair things
She gently talked, — low murmurings
Of summer waves along the shore
Or merry laugh of plashing oar, —
Talked of Genevra's mother and the days
Of happy youth, of wildwood ways
Green with their ferns and dewy mosses,
And of the fragrant wind that tosses
Light, whispering leaves, — the eyes soft closed
And the pale brow in sleep reposed.
Then Margaret rose, and quickly drew
Some draperies down to hide from view
The picture, — saw and gathered all
The scattered leaves up from the floor,
And murmured as she glanced them o'er,
This is one mischief more let fall
By ill-starred Marcus. I must read
That which is written here, and heed
To counteract the mocking spite
That thrusts Genevra from the light
To darkness, and I deeply fear
Past hope of any earthly cheer."

Who ever lived, nor learned to know
His mark of birth, or soon, or late,
The shunless lineage stamp of fate,

The blazoned and escutcheoned sign
Of a long-drawn ancestral line, —
The monogram of woe?
Poor Margaret turned with troubled sigh
And by a shaded lamp slow read
That which the pillowed drooping head
Still traced in dreams confusedly.

II.

OCTAVIA TO GENEVRA.

O LADY of the spotless brow,
I lingered near thee, and I bow
My heart to thy sweet sovereignty;
And wonder never more that he
Prince Maurice, — well I name him so, —
Seemed not to think nor see nor know
That others could be fair or bright
While dwelling in the memory light
Of one like thee, though far away, —
Whose spirit's ever brightening ray
Shines through a form that is not common clay.

Thy being's medium, starry clear,
Undimmed by doubt, or grief, or fear,
Hides not the vast and gracious plan
Which holds the universe and man
Safely beneath one sovereign eye,
To thee a Father's. . . . With a sigh

I look, and, all-distorted pass
Dread images across life's glass,
Sullen, and scorned, and tortured. Why —
I would not, yet must ever ask,
Conning an old, a fruitless task, —
Why, if our being's Lord so high
Is both omnipotent and good,
Why have the Moloch altars stood
Through all the ages? blood and fire
Mixed hissing on the quenchless pyre
Fed with all human agonies,
Which, to forget hope vainly tries?
Amidst the wreck of towers and domes,
The city's pride, and pillaged homes,
Have shrieked to silent heavens in vain
Poor violated maids, and pain
Of slaughtered infants. Darkly died
Faith's fervent martyrs though they sighed
Their last breath praying: and deny
None can that o'er the orbed earth
Goes up the vain pathetic cry
Of poor brute creatures, while man's mirth,
Childish yet horrible, heeds not
Or heeds to mock it; and no spot
May shield them and no mercy spare. —
Can God, as man refuse to care?

Oh! life has been, and is, and must
Remain the same, a misery;

Hide it we will, yet ever see, —
What power hath said, this shall not be?
We start up, living, from the dust
And gaze around in wonder, smile,
And hope, and strive, a little while, —
Hate madly — and as madly love, —
Dream of a something, thought above,
Which, if, and if, and if we may
Perchance attain. Then, yea or nay
From us availing naught, comes in
The ruffian of old age, and rends
With ugly weapons the fair face
And cracks the tuneful voice, and bends
The form, stealing out from their place
In eye and lip each gentle grace;
Yet, leaving to its prison thin
And cold a conscious human heart,
Low beating a funereal part,
In life's dread chorus; haunted still
By joys once known, which now but thrill
With agony for something lost
O'er which a soundless sea is tossed.
Afraid to love one breathing thing,
Since all must scorn such offering, —
Too weak to strive, too sad to pray,
Such is the record of life's lengthened way.

Forgive, thou truest friend, and bless
Our parting hour, though bitterness

Of thought to strange words found its way
And wiser had been silent. Nay,
Small need to fear that I can dim
The light of holy seraphim,
Or that within thy halcyon eyes
By breath of my sad sophistries.
Something there is which may be told
Briefly and sternly — pray withhold
All censure and all pity. I am bold
In hopelessness, and calm, and cold,
And for thy sake will much of truth unfold.

My father is a clergyman.
To make him so all grace that can
Pass over to another's soul
From blessing hand and sweeping stole
Of the Right Reverend Bishop Lord
Of Canterbury was by word
And act bestowed; more freely since
True heraldry might all convince
His rights ancestral were most clear
As third-born son of a true peer.

We traveled, pleased, and lingering still,
In the new Western world, until
Virginia's shore and sleeping bay
Had won us, and we chose to stay.
Soon we had found a pleasant home
On a fair height from which the dome,

The arch, the colonnade were ours
Of the white capitol, — or bowers
Of woodland by the winding river,
Still country scenes, and sunbeams ever.

One day, I need not name the place,
I first beheld that kingly face
Which you have seen. I heard the voice
Which you have heard; and must rejoice
All hearts that ever felt the power
Of such a voice, speaking the words
Which in that magical bright hour
Came thronging like enchanted birds,
And filled a thousand souls with strange
Deep music. Now, even now arrange
Once more the memories, high and proud,
Wondrous and spell-like. Burst no loud
And vulgar cheering, but each heart
Held lessons never to depart.

And I? I scarcely breathed. My soul
Knelt to him as a Deity, —
I could have prayed to him as we
Pray to the Holiest. . . . Unroll
No more, thou vast and hidden scroll
On which Time writes from age to age,
Sealing each strange and maddening page,
Fragments of more than legendry!
That which has been may ever be —

Dread mocking of the earnest heart,
Soul-scars infixed with changeless art.
The ocean's waves dash vainly o'er
Footprints in rock along the shore;
And though some chisel should efface
An age-formed record from its place,
One Might alone can e'er control
To crush time's record from the soul.

. . . . . .

I have no right to think of thee —
To think thy thoughts, and, thinking, see
Thee as my trancèd dream still sees,
Thou grand mind-ruling Pericles!

III.

I often met him, where I stood
In silk and pearls beneath the flood
Of magical, all-splendid light
Where beauty grows so more than bright.
If but my glove were touched by his,
I, foolish child, for only this
In a fair cabinet rose-lined
Kept the poor worthless thing enshrined.
He passed through thronging crowds the while
His lips just crossed with their slight smile.
He spoke with polished courtesy
To every other, and to me,
And least of all himself would know
That he had smiled or spoken so.

My proud heart spurned at last its chain
With frantic violence. "Again,"
I said, "shall I pretend to be
A thing one eye should care to see?
I am a fool, a serf, a slave, —
A menial's garb henceforth I crave!"

True to the madness of my pride,
My jeweled robes were thrown aside, —
I fled from pain I would not bear, —
To find a rest my only care.
Hidden within a housemaid's dress
I sought employment, with success
Too soon. A lady said I seemed
Most worthy, and, although she deemed
It wrong, she meant for once to trust,
And I must prove her wise and just.
She had been ill, and could not dare
To leave the drawing-rooms in care
Of common servants; to her eye —
Not dull to judge — familiarly
I knew good houses — would not do
As one girl did — spoiling to woe
A costly Turner which was hazy
And in its finish slightly mazy —
So, "Sure," she said, "it was not right —
Good clāning thin would bring it bright."

I followed to a suite of rooms
All shadowy with rich velvet glooms,

And lighted with the artist glow
Of grand rare pictures hanging low.
"These rooms," — she said, "your work is here, —
Keeping them nicely, never fear
One censure, for the master's way
Is kind, I can most truly say."

"The mistress too, — is she the same?"
I asked; "and will you speak the name
Of those I shall be called to serve?
I trust their goodness to deserve."

Then musingly the matron said,
"You were not in this city bred;
All here know well the senator
Whose favor crowds are seeking for,
Who is so popular and loved
All heed if but his hand is moved.
He is unmarried, but they say
The cause of it was the strange way
Of one who to be wed refused
Although she loved him. I have mused
How she could do so hard a thing
And he, past your imagining,
So grand and handsome. You must keep
Your heart, my girl, — nay, do not weep,
I was but playful; still, be wise —
See not too much with those black eyes.
His bell-call do not think for you,

But for his valet, Franz the true.
Myself and husband long have kept
This mansion, and to us have swept
Gift after gift, more, vastly more
Than twice our earnings counted o'er,
Till we are wealthy; farther still,
A home is given to us by will.
Bound in our hearts and in our life,
We serve with only loving strife
To show a grateful willingness
To pay a debt which grows no less."

She left me, — and rushed angry tears,
As rain before the dark sky clears.
Had I not turned my feet away
From rich and haughty life, to stray
On desert, dangerous paths, and with
No care but this, my monolith
And tomb to shape, unheard, unknown,
Unrecognized one faintest tone
Fraught with a memory spurned and past? —
Yet I was there! most spiteful cast
Of mocking fortune's die! But she,
Dame Moyses, need not think for me!
She cannot know — how could it be?
My father, though with sorrow bowed,
Is still by far too calm and proud
To pass o'er gossip tongues my name,
Nor will by slightest look or word

Permit a rumor vile were stirred —
He will guard well my maiden fame.
Dame Moyses with her gracious mien
Is but a servant, ne'er has seen
From her life's way, so wise and deft,
One dream of all my life has left.

What must I do? — move on unscared
As a sure player drops his card.
'T is plain "a tangled web" I weave,
Must weave it still though I deceive.
He may not see me, — if he should
I have not grown so vainly good
But he shall learn with deep surprise
From stupid and indifferent gaze
To hold his memory in some haze
Of doubt, though witness his clear eyes.
Now let me think: I safely have
My diamonds — documents that prove
I am her rightful heir, the dear
Great-aunt, who gave them but to hear
I had the eyes, the brow, the way
Of one, not English, thus they say.*
I 'll go to her, — then I will write
To my dear father, — may the sight
Of this imagined letter save
Him from a wish to seek the grave.

* Note Poem, p. 129.

Slowly my musing eyes were raised,
And from within the mirror gazed
Two black, black eyes that burn and gleam —
Oh, if I were that mirror dream!
Burst forth in words, — "why must I *be?*"
And pitiful it was to see
How, flowing on unheededly
A ceaseless fountain, teardrops streak
With white the brown-stained hidden cheek,
While on the coarse, brown, servant's dress
Two white and shapely hands did press,
And in them, tightly crushing clasp,
Misplaced in that forgetful grasp,
A handkerchief of duchess point.
One moment, and my lips half said,
As to some fiend or witch, "Aroint!"
For suddenly had burst a dread,
Strange, indescribable loud tone
Of laughter, — yet, I was alone.

The vast rich parlors showed no place
To hide a human form and face,
Hence, as some awful spell, uprose
And round my brain in horror froze
The sudden question, "Am I mad?"
And clearly, as it seemed, the sad
Worn face of my loved sire, the fair
Sweet mother's, and the sunny air
And loveliness around my home, —
All my pure blessings which as foam

Of worthlessness I had been spurning
Came as in vision slow returning,
With contrast of the height I had
Deepening the question, "Am I mad?"
The very agony of thought
Wrenched forth a strength unknown, unsought, —
And, "By this wondrous world," I said,
"O'er whose fire-depths we safely tread,
And by my hope, and by my will,
My soul, I am not mad, be still!
By the sweet Power to whom I flee
I dare to say, it shall not be."
No whisper came of slow debate
Whether in early years or late
God heard or ever answered prayer.
Pain of itself I felt could bear
Me up on faith's full-rushing wave.
Could the created being brave
So much of feeling, joy or pain,
And the Creator still remain
A voiceless and half-conscious law
Of dread necessity? I saw
A Being then, one hope, one way,
Swift-sinking on my knees to pray
Such prayer as ne'er before had crossed
My trembling lips, "Oh, save, or I am lost!"

I rose in utter calmness; traced
As by some skillful hand, and placed

Before me, was my future way.
From England I must write, and say,
"Our home, the dear old English home,
Amid its parks and streams, is fair,
And, once more, bringing gladness there,
Will not my honored father come?"

Meanwhile, for an uncertain space
Of time, I, in my present place,
Some useful lessons well might learn,
Seeming awhile the trampled fern.
Patience of thought, the cultured hand,
Prepare the proudest to command.

Young princes may not truly see
Things they should know, through luxury
Of palace halls. While ever served
Obsequiously, too much unnerved
Is manly purpose, and they learn
No greatness. Bruce of Bannockburn
After a rugged strife was crowned, —
While Edward's son no honors found,
But yielding fled the conflict stern.
They who mankind have ably ruled
Often in various life were schooled.
Great Alfred with the neatherd talked,
Brave Henry once with Falstaff walked —
So I will be a servant true
A few brief days, then smile adieu.

The duchess point was put aside,
My cuffs and collar simply tied,
My jetty curls drawn back and braided,
And on the cheeks my tears had faded
A soft, brown, even tint was spread,
And from my hands the whiteness fled.
I took my task with earnest care,
Swept the rich carpets clean and fair,
Shook clear the curtains, and replaced
The silver bands that purely graced
Their purple wealth that downward fell
From silver cornice mounted well.
Soon smiled the pictures forth in new
Fresh color, and the violet's hue
Of springtime meadows brightly lay
Where straying sunbeams found their way
To well-brushed cushions. To deface
The matchless mirrors was no spot,
Nor on the central marble blot
Nor dust, where stood a massive vase
Of burnished silver. All was done;
Calm pleasure on my spirit fell, —
One little something finished well
Memory might join with sinking sun.

Days passed in pleasant quietness,
And I forgot my face to dress
In shadowy hues; but no one heeded,
Disguise no longer seemed as needed;

For Mrs. Moyses only said,
With lifted glass and bended head,
"You have a fairness not the worst, —
I thought you sunburned at the first."

A wealth of leisure hours was mine,
Rare books were near as by design;
I read, and sometimes sketched with care
A chosen picture passing fair
Among the many. It was one
That haunted me, — could I have known
That scene — 't was English? What the spell
Divine I could not, nor could tell
Just in what lines, what soft light's play
Its beauty as a magic lay.
I could not draw it as I would,
But failing, more excited grew
Till once, beneath thought's eager sway
All other claims had passed away.

'T was not an hour I ever knew
To bring the senator, — no sound
Through all the mansion's quiet bound
Had reached my ear, — yet, silent stood
The noble Maurice in the room, —
And, on his look a stamp of doom.
By the deep-heaving chest I saw
The fearful agony to draw
One breath of crushed and sinking life.

It seemed as the last awful strife
Must cease forever in his breast
Ere I could aid him to a rest
On the near cushion, where he sank
In a faint helplessness, while dank
And fatal on his forehead stood
Large drops like death-dew. When I would
Have fled for aid, a cold, cold hand
Held mine as it had been a band
Of adamant. I could but stand,
And, in my madness wildly dare
Thank God that I, alone, was there.

At last the rigid clasp was less,
And less convulsive was the press
Of the firm manly lips. Ah! there
You should have dried the soft brown hair
And the grand forehead pale and fair;
For, gratefully, I thought, his eyes
Looked up to thank me as one tries
To voiceless speak. Again they closed,
And with a low voice I proposed
To ring for Franz. He said, with pain
Scarce whispering, "It would be vain,
I sent him to — he is away. —
Brave Marcia, do not fear to stay, —
I 'm better now, though full assured
My last of pain is soon endured."

Again he rested silently.
Erelong more lifelike hues low-burned
On cheek and lip, and slow he turned
At last his look and thought to me, —
One moment gazed, with steady eyes
Fixed thoughtfully, — half moved to rise
As he had thought by me were claimed
Some courtesy as yet unnamed.
"Lady Octavia, may I ask,
In painful and self-humbled task,"
He said, "if you with Mrs. Moyses
Will stay, or go where dearest voices
Wait, hushed with grief, to welcome you?"

O maddening hour! What could I do?
He knew me — more, he had been telling
My father I was safely dwelling
A favored inmate of his halls;
He knew the title which for me
Unprized was waiting o'er the sea.
Till reason should resume her sway,
And fruitless dreaming pass away
They waited as it oft befalls
Wisdom can wait serene and still
For change of folly's reckless will.
With sudden cold reserve I said,
"'T is much regretted I have led
You thus to question. Kindly, sir,
Believe a truth which I aver:

My coming here was chance alone.
My Cunard passage has been paid
For England; I have lingering stayed
From many ships to choose the one
I wish for most, — when safely there,
My father will receive with care
Assurance of my duteous love —
No other claims are his above."

Maurice had heard with half-closed eyes,
And, if he felt, concealed surprise;
But slowly said, "And will you go
Where the full streams of travel flow
On to the Continent, the Rhine,
Lucerne and Constance and the fine
Most rare Geneva, — to Vevey?
I have a friend who sails to-day
For Paris in her outward way
To dwell by the great mountains. Should
You ever meet her, — and I would
You may, — love her, and she will bless
Your life. Her soul's pure nobleness
None can resist, but must breathe-in
Her atmosphere."
He drew a thin
Small casket from his loosened vest
And held it, resting on his breast,
A little time, then opened it;
And in a jeweled frame well fit

I saw your face. "Her name is here,"
He murmured, "and some letters, dear
To me as heaven, — be a friend
For us." I saw his hand extend
To me the casket, — it was gold
And ebony, — with it I hold
My pledge was asked that I would find
The loved, idealized, enshrined,
Of that grand heart and ruling mind.
I 've found her, and my trust resigned.

Thy Maurice kept the picture, — and,
The manly-beautiful white hand
Closed over it with such expression
Of pure and gentle tenderness
That a most eloquent confession
Had spoken to the soul far less;
And when, with light of the next day
From thronging carriages were seen
Grave saddened looks, and titled men
Paused in the darkly-draperied halls,
While mourning dimmed the city walls,
Pale, peacefully that hand still lay
Above its treasure. None would try
To move it, — two alone knew why.

The casket had revealed your name,
And I had seen the very same
Among the names, the outward bound.

Thus, since a letter I had found
With utmost care sealed and addressed,
I hastened it, — you know the rest, —
I hastened it by my own hand —
'T was passed in small boat from the strand
Too soon. One week, the seventh day
I, too, had eastward sailed away.

Franz failed to reach you, but, still sealed,
Bore back a letter which revealed
No word to me, by other eyes
Profaned were its pure mysteries.

IV.

At last I saw you, and had seen
Your Margaret ask with cautious mien
For a brave trusty lad to row
Your barge with skillful care, and slow
Pausing beside the lake's fair shores
With ready but unhastening oars.
A wild and reckless witching thought —
Such madness in my frame is wrought
I know not how — came hastily.

My thought was action, — I could see
Full soon in mirrors here or there
An elegant boy-sailor, not so fair
As was my face at morning hour;
Yet searching eyes forgot to lower

Nor seem to question of my past.
Kindly and pleasant to the last
I found your service, — but I go
To meet my sire 'midst stately show
Of England's high-escutcheoned pride,
A youthful earl's affianced bride.
An ancient honor still must live
By wealth which my good aunt will give
Free through my hand, — 't is mockery
To fix life's way thus heartlessly;
But, worse the wrong to do no kindness
In selfish and too passionate blindness.

My masquerades are ended now.
Henceforth my coroneted brow
Shall ne'er forget its pride of place,
But win the reverence, the grace
We know is fitting. Have no fears —
I know my way, — and sudden tears
Tell how my inmost soul reveres
England's true honors and historic years.

V.

The picture? All can soon be told.
You saw my drawing, kindly thought
My hand deserved to be well taught
By some great master. With your gold
I went to him, the skilled and old, —
A master honored; but I claimed

No student's place, — I am not blamed
For this I trust. All you have given,
And, pure as star of summer even,
One not small diamond of my own
Joined with the name and photograph
Of one afar to fame well known,
The artist but persuaded half
To paint the picture, — still, the face
He studied, changing not his place,
In a long silence, then drew out
From shadow which was all about
A full-length canvas framed. He mused
Forgetful of my presence, and perused
Again the photograph with eye
That kindled; slow and silently
I left him with no other sign
Or answer. . . . To a hasty line
From the great master soon received
I yielded promptly, standing mild
Before him like a well-schooled child
Until from questioning relieved
By the brown-study mood that fell
O'er him once more with speechless spell.

One thing the artist said, to you
I well may name. The way he knew
Is mystery, but at once it grew
As all were fully understood, —
And, surely, earnestly he would

Unto the limit of his power
The sweet Genevan of the tower
Please in the picture. "It would be,"
He said, "an hour prized wondrously
If I could see her sitting here.
Art's true Madonna, without fear
I to the world could proudly give
If she would deign to bid it live."

Dear, gracious lady, grant his prayer,
And, if I may so rashly dare,
Let two grand pictures, as thy heir,
Be mine at last, the dearest light
Of ancient halls now storied bright
With history's outstanding forms
Of might and beauty. Deeply warms
My inmost heart with a strange love
That lifts my thoughts all pain above
Near thee; and half I 'm pining still
To hold thy oars, and gently fill
My life with the white Alps, and thee, —
Yet will I go — Heaven guard the yet to be!
. . . . . .

VI.

Genevra lived, — again, again
Life's tortuous links of living pain
Resumed their sway of heart and brain.
Genevra lived, but in her breast
An unseen blade had pierced its rest.

"If once he loved, he loves not now"
Infixed the death-light of her brow, —
And yet she smiled to questioning eyes,
And all kind far-sought counsels wise
Heard patiently, the trusted ways
To lengthen out life's wasting days.
No more she shunned the proffered aid
Of Margaret's arm; but, kindly stayed
And leaning tremblingly, she walked,
And gently, though but rarely, talked.

Soon, soon she walked no more, but lay
Pale, pure, in beautiful decay.
With claspèd hands, in grieving deep,
At times she silently would weep
For some slight wavering of thought
Where others ne'er had error sought, —
But oftener far in radiant calm,
On brow and lip a voiceless psalm,
She waited patiently and still
Beneath the Sovereign Father's will.
And Margaret watched in wordless pain
By the bent lily without stain.
Once only with low steady voice
Of one too humble to rejoice,
Words told from pure Genevra's breast
Its guarded hope, its strength of rest.
"Soon will my earth-life pass away,
This form will be but lifeless clay, —

O friends, ye will not think me dead, —
But, passing onward without dread
In endless being. The blest word
Of full assurance now is heard,
A music low and wondrous. All
My life lies hushed to list the fall
Of its deep benediction, — word
Of joy! the thirty-first and third
Of a prophetic page, left there
To beam, on, on! and when my last
Of mortal breath will quick be passed,
Place my cold finger pointing where
The true great God, with aspect mild,
Will read his thought, nor spurn the child
Who trusted it. I shall know how
To die, — die into better life,
Charmed free from passion strife.
Beneath the bright benignant brow
That never will misjudge I kneel,
My soul kneels, evermore to feel
That holiest brow, that Highest Name
Shall light eternity, the same."

VII.

The spring-time came once more, and brought
Its glow of hope and promise, caught
The lingering wind and breathed away
Its roughness. Gentle was the sway
As rules some gracious princess, — soon

The sunny-warm light of the noon
Brought benisons of beauty, — for
This earth we tread, like human love
Responds to sun-bright kindness, nor
Withholds from loving smile above
Its glad smile. . . . Coos a snow-white dove
Along the brown and moss-fringed eaves
Of the old lakeside tower, nor leaves
His place when no white kindred wing
His soft calls through the elm-boughs bring.

Within, a face than lilies far more white
Leaned on its pillow in morn's early light.
The eyelids rest, and not one faintest breath
Now shades the small bright mirror — is it death?
"Might he not come," one said, "and speak aloud?
It cannot harm her; but this full and proud
Success, we know, might almost wake the dead
To hear it."

With incautious and firm tread
A stranger came. He spoke with tone
That startled by its full and lone
And bell-like clearness in strange power
The stillness of that room and hour.
He spoke, but briefly, thus: "I bring
Two pearl-bound volumes glittering.
The loving care of some most bold
True friends, proving how dear they hold

The costlier gift, thy treasured thought
All gems and gold, this casket wrought
To guard it well."
The clear bright eyes
And with no look that seemed surprise,
Opened once more as in a last
Full recognition of the life soon passed.
They rested not with the soft fold
Of tinted leaves in pearl and gold,
But wandered steadily away
And eagerly. The table stood
Beneath the window, and there lay
The open page. Beside it, good,
Pale Margaret wept, — to that fixed look
She answered, rose, and brought the Book;
And the pure finger placed above,
"*Loved with an everlasting love*,"
Smiled out death's charm of all-mysterious grace,
In spirit halo lay the sweet dead face.

Fulfilling a firm promise given
To Maurice ere his life was riven,
One came who waited silently, —
And none forbade that this should be —
To claim the slumbering vision fair
That he the slumberer might bear
Back o'er the azure ocean dim
To the ancestral tomb of him

The honored, and the ever true;
And in their marble home these two
Dwell peacefully, — their meeting joy
Passed up to Heaven, where no alloy
Mingles with love, — God's worship love,
Nor humbler, which may rise to Him above.

A NOTE POEM.

"My diamonds — documents which prove
I am her rightful heir, — the dear
Great-aunt who gave them but to hear
I have the eyes, the brow, the way
Of one — not English, — thus they say."

I.

Two sisters of a noble name,
Of beauty rare and spotless fame,
Both loved, as sisters sometimes do,
One lover. He was noble too,
And foreign-born, — they orphaned were, —
No meddling kindred might demur
Though one should wed the Count Alfonso,
The other some brave true Alonzo.

And he, the Count, how shall he choose?
His heart most wisely, fondly woos
The Lady Ellinor; yet soon
Young Ethel's witchcraft, sealed in ice,
Has all confused his paradise.
One summer eve the crescent moon
Shone o'er her and the marble floor,
And pillars vined, and half-shut door, —
She stood as a white statue stands
With gleaming brow and folded hands,

With snow-white robe and haughty eye
Where dwelt no dream of lover's sigh, —
Yet to the Count near lingering,
She seemed earth's one enchanted thing.
In silent gray of the next morn,
Ere the sun kissed his day new-born,
Young Ethel waited calm beside
Her sister's couch. Soon opened wide
The Lady Ellinor's blue eyes
From sleep, and gazed with still surprise
To read her silent sister's mien.

"I came to wait as you have seen,"
Fair Ethel said, "your wakening,
And now to speak the words I bring.
'T is you, my Ellinor, must wed
With Count Alfonso. I have read
Fate's book, and it is written there.
You are, my Ellinor, more fair
Than I, and fair with coming years
Will grow, I fading. Nay, no tears!"

The elder sister gently said,
"Come, pet, and rest with me your head
And listen so. But yesternight
He watched you in the sweet moonlight
And all his soul spoke from his eyes, —
No faintest veil did truth disguise.
Since then strange peace on me has gleamed.
He loves you more than I had dreamed."

"Hush, Ellinor! I will not hear
One word like this; my way is clear.
Again I say, fate's book is read, —
'T is you, not I, that shall be wed
With Count Alfonso. In one week
I shall crush out a fancy meek,
If such now lives. The Count shall bless
His lucky stars of blessedness
That he is safe, and shall decline
To share my moods. All must combine
To prove my words a prophecy —
'T is you, dear Nell, can yield — not I."

II.

A few bright moons had come and shone,
And Lady Ellinor was gone
To dwell where Roman, Goth and Moor
Reared well majestic arch and door
Of stately piles, — and Christian art
With lines of stone wrought high its part
Of cloistered grandeur, wondrous all,
To shape Spain's ancient capital;
And oft Alfonso blessed the hour
That lit his hearthstone and his bower,
That gave his home, his heart, his life
A true and fair, an English wife.

The Lady Ethel lived unwed
In her ancestral home, and fled

All questioning eyes of noble friends, —
Though prompt her watchful ear attends
When plead the sorrowful and poor,
And none in want must leave her door.
Of all who came no one might trace
Nor tell of Lady Ethel's face, —
Her words were few, her ways unfold
Only her pity and her grace, —
Her mien reserved, though, scarcely cold,
Subdued all eyes the overbold.
She came and went a priestess veiled,
None dared to dream of grief bewailed.

Her lofty bower was opened fair
O'er graceful park and breezy hills
Beneath earth's freshest, bluest air
Which every nerve with vigor thrills.
A gallery wide o'erhung the lawn
Where fountains plashed at early dawn,
And rippled musically low
To evening's footsteps soft and slow.
No busy maid nor serviteur
Was ever called to enter there,
To that high room so still and rare, —
The Lady, — all unseen by her
Were wondering eyes sly-peeping. Soon
Most marvelous tales, a welcome boon,
Spread far and wide, — the gossips say
That place where quiet Ethel dwelt,

And sometimes wept, and often knelt,
Was like a home for any fay,
All draped in soft and costly lace, —
And silver lamps alone had place,
And velvet rich, and books gold-clasped,
And pictures which whole fortunes grasped, —
While something shone like large bright stars
From ceiling veiled by silken bars
Alternate with the filmy cloud
Of airy lace that waved and bowed
Above rare flowers upheld below
From polished urns that flush and glow.

One summer eve, the air was still, —
The lady's door was closèd ill
Or slightly, — and it parted slow —
Then closed and parted without sound.
A new tale went the hamlets round, —
The Lady Ethel had been bound
Hour after hour in trance before
A lofty knight who armor bore.
His mantle hid yet grandly showed
His stately form — a broad plume flowed
Above his high and crested brow.
Black, silken, magic curls, and eyes
Where starry midnight ever lies,
Pride and sweet dreadfulness were there —
What woman should such danger dare?
What woman's heart that would not bow?

III.

A lady, the one grandchild heir
Of that most noble wedded pair
Who looked from their strong castle bold
On Spain's Toledo famed and old,
Her nearest kindred buried all,
Shadowed by sacred mourning's pall,
Came to her English friends and land.

One year, and love's and wedlock's band
With a great earl's third son was laid
On her young life. The priests had prayed
And blessed the ring, and voices low
Were whispering, "How strange things go!
She should be Countess, she so fair, —
Ne'er can our Earl's new bride compare
With this new Ellinor, who looks
And smiles as true and good as she
Who smiled in youth so graciously —
Countess, — in Spain, — her name 's in books."

Yes, lovely Ellinor anew
Came forth from mourning robe and veil
An English beauty, blonde, not pale,
With English curls of flaxen hue.

In lapse of time, her daughter, named
Octavia, had most fully claimed.

Each trait except the olive clear
That made more perfect and more dear
His manly cheek, her great grandsire
The Count Alfonso ; all dark fire
Of his black eyes, his silken curls
Black as the eyes, though vain their twirls
Upon her forehead and her cheek
To hide the English blush-rose hue
Or dim the lily mingling through, —
Of her strange beauty all would speak.
When she, a child, heard words of this,
She deemed the childish pastime bliss
To stain her face to olive clear
And bid the smiling servants near :
"Say now 'Doña,' and never 'pet,'
Attend, and never more forget."

Of things that entered as a spell
This maiden's life she best can tell.
A paper found in later years
Is copied with misgiving fears,
For stamped upon the leaf appears
A coronet. As fair as proud
One stately head no grief e'er bowed.
The starry mind, the strong true heart
Dwelt palaced safe from ill apart.
She would not frown though others share
Some whispers from a life so fair.

IV.

"When first Aunt Ethel thought of me,
A child of three years, bounding free
Among the butterflies and flowers,
Counting my life by joy-filled hours,
She sent her carriage and behest —
That I must come, her one request.
I went, for I had ne'er known fear, —
A something new was ever dear, —
I went alone, — it was not well
To grant more than her wishes tell.

"She took me kindly to her heart,
Talked things to win with childlike art;
She bore me to her eyrie bright
And wonderful with artist light
That softly filled the magic place.
I kissed the white cheek by my face
And whispered, 'Is this Paradise?
Have you been good and always nice,
So you can always, always stay
When naughty ones are sent away?'
Warm kisses fell and, too, a tear,
Upon my face, — 'You will not fear,
Dear child,' she said, — 'what if I can
Bring from the dark a bold brave man?'

"'I never fear, dear auntie, no;
But tell me, is he happy so,

Shut in the darkness? do I know
Him? will you let him go?'

"My good aunt laughed right cheerfully,
And with one motion of her hand
A starred dark velvet glides above, —
I spring, and fearless, eager, stand.

"'Can you tell who it is, my love?'
Aunt Ethel said, ''T is grandpa,' I,
'My own grand-grandpa. Mamma names
Me Spanish, and I play at games
I am a queenly Lady proud
In castle of a sunset cloud
With silver shining door.'

"'Now, darling, hark, and tell me more.
How can you know your great-grandsire?
You never saw his face, 't is plain,
And, though his portraits all admire,
There 's not in shadow nor in sun
Like this you see another one
In England nor in Spain.'

"Well might the Lady Ethel say
Such words, for her own hand that ray
Of wondrous spirit life had given —
It cheered and saved when lonely riven —
To the dead canvas; and she knew
Her noble friend, grand as he stood,

On her deep inmost life ne'er threw
Such splendor, nor her spirit's mood
So ruled as this insensate form
Shaped from her young love's deathless charm.
She knew it was not he, was more, —
And in that form she could adore
A Being conscious, all divine,
Her Christ, her king, and feel forgiven, —
As in a life drawn near to heaven
Could win a joy, a sacred sign,
A reflex light with her to shine,
A dream of one great Perfectness,
Found at the last to fully bless.

"'I must have dreamed it, auntie, then,'
I puzzled out at last; and when
My aunt had heard, 'Dream on, my sweet,'
She said, 'and never fail to meet
The Count Alfonso for one day
Each week, — and tell me now, and say,
Old James was careful of my child?
The horses were as kittens mild?
I bade him drive as he had care
To bring a crystal mirror fair
Or vase of pearl too white and rare.'

"I loved Aunt Ethel, and she grew
From week to week more sweet and true.
No end e'er came of gentle art

To win and keep my childish heart, —
No end of stories quaint and old,
No end of histories true and bold,
No end of minerals, gems, and shells
From cabinets and unseen wells;
She taught in ways that charmed my youth,
Science and wisdom, taste and truth.
And thus I grew Aunt Ethel's child,
Faithful to her, if sometimes wild, —
Her treasure, the unconscious heir
Of her vast wealth, which without care
Grew steadily to more and more,
Unspent her annual income store.

III.

"I was sixteen. One summer day
My eyes grew dim, before me lay
In velvet cushions an array
Of large old diamonds, dazzling bright,
Heirlooms filled with historic light.
And they were mine, and I might wear
And use them when I would and where.

"That day the young earl, titled high
With all his late-lost sire laid by,
Curbed his strong steed to moveless stand
Where by a liveried page's hand
My carriage-door was held aside
With form and state of titled pride;

And I had entered wondering why
My parents with quick tear and sigh
Did not 'midst kisses bid me go,
Yet say the hours would move too slow
Till my return, — but, near beside
Earl Edmund saw, and so I tried
To act my 'Lady's part' full well, —
How sad it seemed I will not tell.

"His dress of deeply mourning hue
A manly form gave to my view.
From foot in silver stirrup's curve
To the young stately head he bent
In graceful deference when he went
No line from elegance could swerve.

"A kind and courteous wish he spoke
That for my journeys would invoke
All pleasant scenes, and peaceful hours,
And safe retreats, and cheerful bowers.
'I may not fondly, rashly, dare
To say that I will meet you there,'
He murmured low, with questioning mien, —
'The Lady Ethel will decree
Five years of banishment for me,
For you five years of girlhood free,
Her reason is not clearly seen;
But, guarded by your noble sire
You are, reluctant I retire.'"

STUDIES WITH HISTORY AND POETIC MYTH.

"Well speed thy mission, bold Iconoclast!
Yet all unworthy of its trust art thou
If with dry eye, and cold unloving heart
Thou tread'st the solemn Pantheon of the Past;
By the great Future's dazzling hope made blind
To all the beauty, power, and truth behind."

WHITTIER.

"Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,
O kingdom of the Past!"

LOWELL.

"Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; they stand as heavenly signs, everlasting witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied possibilities of human nature; which greatness he who has never seen, nor rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself forever doomed to be little." — CARLYLE.

"How majestically they walk in history, some like the sun, others wrapped in gloom, yet glorious as night with stars!" — LONGFELLOW.

— "God's witnesses, the voices of his will
Heard in the slow march of the centuries still."

WHITTIER.

Ye human hearts perished,
Through erring and loss,
In scenes where wild passions
Their ocean-waves toss,
Our human hearts seek you
Time's wide gulfs across.

Ye loved as we're loving,
Ye dreamed as we dream,
Ye sighed for the glorious,
Watched, dying, its beam;
We too die while grasping
Some far hope we seem.

ALEXANDER.

Prophetic truth at last! *
Quake, Xerxes' throne and heir!
One Grecian heart beats hot and fast
To think a foe's bold footsteps passed
O'er Hellas proud and fair.

* Daniel viii. 5–7.

The mocking shame rests there
On Hellas, vale and hill,
And Persia's vain luxurious state
Must feel the tread of coming fate,
A stern and deadly thrill.

Held by the Sovereign will
Stood he of princely line,
His white plume shone, his clear eye smiled,
Ambition breathed yet undefiled, —
He felt a might divine

Above him rule and shine;
And, swift as eagles press,
He passed with bold defiant wing
Beyond Thermopylæ, a king
By his own kingliness.

The grave Amphyctyons bless
The youthful conqueror's way,
Look on his bright imperious face,
Nor breathes one sage out from his place
Dissent from his felt sway.

In vain with God his stay
May hostile arrows hiss, —
Granicus rolls behind him, Tyre
Is won; and soon despair and fire
O'erwhelm Persepolis.

Lived he for this, for this,
To bend at Ammon's fane
And dream an idol-god was by
To nerve his arm, to light his eye
And shield from death and pain?

Left in his valor vain
He braves the javelin, —
His fainting brow before the foe
Is bent upon his shield full low,
The barb his breast within.

No more all hearts to win
His grace a bond may twine,*
But he who wept Darius dead
Life-blood of his true friend can shed,
Grown fierce with rage and wine.

Left by the hand divine,
The vengeful Furies seem
To scorch his brain, to move his hand,
To change his sceptre for a brand
That waves like frenzy's gleam.

* "The character of Alexander of Macedon, with all its dark shades, has a nobleness and sweetness that win our hearts. No one else so gained the love of the conquered. . . . Nor have any ten years left so lasting a trace on the history of the world as those of his career."

He was noble and true after the best models he had to study, and he firmly believed in a Supernal rule of his destiny.

Left in his dying dream,
Deep pales that fevered face, —
The haughty strength, the young brave heart
No more in valor's deeds have part, —
The death-car now has place.

The death-car? Nay, what trace
Of all that ponderous pride
Has earth to-day? What velvet fold?
What mourning state? what jewels? gold?
Vain search! — we know he died.

ALCIBIADES.

Kinsman of Pericles,
Pupil of Socrates,
Curled Alcibiades
Lived but in vain.

Base from proud Pericles,
False from true Socrates,
Passed Alcibiades
Ruin to gain.

CASSANDRA.

PHANTOM of unread meaning,
Thou pale and tortured one,
Apollo-loved and gifted, —
A mockery was thy sun.

Thy mournful eyes saw ever
Beneath the fairest bloom,
Beneath all glow, all beauty,
The shadows and the doom.

Thou couldst not choose but see them
When crested Hector stood
Supreme in strength, in valor, —
The wounds, the dust, the blood.

Yet vain thy full, far seeing,
All vain the loved to save, —
The god-gift asked so wildly
But made thy heart a grave.

Cassandra, O Cassandra,
Know'st thou the home of peace?
Vindictive bright Apollo
Should give thy woe surcease.

Hast thou in nature's bosom,
With eyelids softly sealed,

A dream untold and painless,
Thy torn heart fully healed?

Ah yes; yet earth has sorrows, —
No shadow-griefs are they,
Heart aches that may not slumber
Forgetfully to-day.

ABSALOM AND HIS SISTER.

By her rich mantle and its clasping gems,
She was the daughter of the king — the fair
Bright sister of the princely Absalom, —
But ah, so changed! Prostrate on the bare earth,
The frail spring flower o'er which some countless host
Has passed with hurrying feet seems not a thing
By half so crushed and trampled.
Absalom
For days and months and years had held vain strife
With his own thoughts, — the consciousness of powers,
Perchance his best and loftiest, which life's bound
Shut in too painfully, — the burning dream
Of noble deeds well done, — of wrongs avenged, —
The grateful honors of a people blessed
Upon his name, — all that ambition breathes
To stir the eager heart ere guilt is there.

For this deep-haunting phantasm of his brain
There was one spell of soothing, the soft voice
And murmuring harp of Tamar; for she knew
To touch the trembling chords even with her sire's
Own mastery; and when she sang some rich
Low melody of love and sacred rest,
Or, sweetly-solemn from her reverent lips
Fell the Jehovah's name, an inward voice
Proclaimed it, and he bowed to the calm might
Of loftier thoughts than seemed his own high dreamings.
A cold hush fell upon her brother's home, —
The princess went with kindly ministry, —
It was the King's wish and express command —
Where pined the young prince Amnon, he whose brows,
Destined to wear the consecrated gold
Of Judah's crown, were fevered with the blood
Of wild-impassioned manhood.

Absalom,
The beautiful, stood by the city gate
At noon, with mien of idlest musing, while
Men passed and did him loving reverence;
But one, a cunning sycophant, drew near
And bent him low to kiss the jeweled hand,
That lay pressed carelessly upon the hilt
Of a still-useless sword, and murmured, "Live,
Live Absalom, whom *God* has stamped a king!"

The prince turned haughtily away, and went
To his lone chamber, for his life's quick fiend
Was troubling him. The evening came and night,
But came not rest. His sleep was weariness
From bad yet tempting visions, and the ray
First seen of the pure dawnlight wooed him forth
To drink in freshness from the morning air
Among the cedars, — thus they met, that brother
And that sister.

A moment he stood still
And gazed like one bewildered — then the whole
Black truth was fathomed; for, when last within
The palace gates the king's sons had been gathered,
While the sole daughter fair and queenly shone, —
His own fair, peerless Tamar, and his eye
Had watched her graceful steps with all the pride
Of his true brother heart, — as if forewarned,
He turned all suddenly to mark, fixed too
On her, the dark, licentious gaze of Amnon.
And now, she lay there on the pitiless earth
Grave-hued, and chill, and motionless as death.

The full, proud lips of Absalom blanched slightly,
And over his smooth brow a penciled vein
Showed clear in swollen, darkening channels — these
Were the sole signs of that fixed, wrathful vow
Which shrank not from its hour of dread fulfilment.

He bent in calmness by the prostrate one,
And raised her head, gathering the long bright hair
Up from the soiling dust; and in those tones
Of low and thrilling gentleness which none
But Absalom could use, he soothed her grief.
Oh! there are agonies which cannot bear
The softest velvet touch of sympathy;
And hers were such, — for when she saw his face
The thought of all she must forever be,
A thing to blush and weep for, in his sight,
Her true, proud, generous brother, was too much
For the strained chords of the deep-struggling heart.
With one keen, quivering cry that pierced the ear
Of Absalom as swords might never pierce,
She sprang off from his bosom, and the look
That glared to his from eyes once beautiful
As starlight of the eastern heavens, was one
That told of madness. At his feet once more
She sank, while from her whitening lips the last
Frail breath of agonized existence seemed
As parting. Nervelessly he bent to raise
That tortured one, and with slow reeling steps
Regained the shielding silence of his home.

Dark were the deeds of Absalom, and stern
And terrible the maledictions are
Around his blighted name; yet David loved
The rebel wanderer, and who shall say
How oft would the regretful son have turned

Back loyally to the king-father's knee
But that a pallid face, all its sweet light
Burned out, pale lips that, wordless, vainly moved,
Rose hauntingly where'er he looked until
The tiger of his heart burst forth to claim
A hecatomb of victims?

THE PROPHET'S CHASTENING.

"Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep.

"Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thy head upon thee; and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men."

EZEKIEL xxiv. 16.

THE lonely river, far Chaboras, lay
Beneath the hushing twilight. Its low tone
Of rippling waters by the sedgy shore
Reached not the arches of its clustering shade, —
Nor stirred the voiceless, brooding mystery where
Knelt captive Judah's prophet. Since high noon
He had bowed lowly thus, but the damp brow,
Half hid in the dark mantle's fold, bore not
On its worn loftiness the radiant calm
That told of high communings, — and yet, God
Had met and spoken with him.

Grief and care
Had been the stern companions of each step
Through all the prophet's life-path. He had turned

With the sick weariness of a pure heart
From haunts of foul idolatry; and when,
Soul-thrilled with trembling earnestness and awe,
He told the certainty of coming wrath,
Had seen it disregarded. Through long days
And nights, with the bare earth and silent heaven
Alone he had kept vigil, heart and soul
Mysteriously wrung by guilt not his;
And yet those words that lie not have decreed
A new deep sense of suffering. The sole chord
Unswept of pain's harsh fingers, must awake, —
That chord which in the depth of human life,
Though hung in loneliness on mourning willow,
Or with relentless hand strained to a task
Of other themes, still in rich undertone
Will breathe its music out of human love.

There was a creature with an angel brow
And soft dark floating tresses, who had dwelt
Within the prophet's home. There was a hand,
Fair as the gleaming ivory of Tyre,
Whose light caressing touch failed not to smooth
The deep lines from his forehead, and could woo
His spirit oft from its dread tension back
To childlike joy. Oh! beautiful she was,
And bright, and young; and her rich maiden heart
And peerless beauty, all, were freely given
To the stern prophet. Naught to her were locks
Of shining darkness, nor the ruddy glow

On youthful manhood's cheek, when calm he stood,
And to the high commission sealed in light, —
In heaven's own kindling glory, on his front,
Strong rebel might, that yielded not, would stoop;
And if at times an awe — almost a fear —
Came o'er her love, she thought of other hours
When he, so raised above humanity,
So clothed with mystery by God's own hand,
In very human weariness would seek
A humbler ministry. She was the link —
The one pure priceless link through which he felt
The might, the charm of human brotherhood,
Yet she for Israel's sake — must die.

No rest
Came to the prophet's pillow, and the hum
Of busy crowds brought no forgetfulness;
For the mysterious power that dwelt within
Ceased not its boding whispers to his heart.
He sought his place of prayer; and as he knelt,
Sudden and swift as darts the lightning's flash
Across his spirit came a consciousness
That the still joy which held him at her side,
His bosom's dove, bore in heaven's sovereign eye
The dark seal of idolatry.
To earth in dread humiliation bent
Was the majestic brow from which had shone
So oft inspiring Godhead; but no words
Of lowly sad confession had found way
Ere the felt voice of all-unearthly peace

Had hushed the troubled waters of this grief;
And the one error of a chastened heart
Had found forgiveness.
Once again he raised
Beseeching hands on high, and would have asked
That He who had forgiven, yet would *spare;*
But then, no utterance came. He knew the cup
Might not pass from his lips; and yet he knelt
Hour after hour, with all his aching heart
Of sorrow bared before the Merciful.
The glassy stream rolled on. Soft, starry light
Stole through the breathless palm-boughs, and white flowers
Looked up with dewy eyes. With one brief prayer
For strength that might not fail, the prophet rose
And sought his home.
The iron lamp hung low
And wrought on the stone floor in ebon shade
Its semblance; but a clear full radiance fell
Where, on a snow-white couch, lay droopingly
A silent form. Apart, yet in that room
Stood one with dark robes, and tight-folded arms,
And stern still breast, — Jehovah's prophet looked
Upon his dead.
Her cold transparent cheek
Had scarce a fainter tint of the pale rose
Than it had worn before, and the hushed lips
Had their own serious sweetness in each curve;
But, hovering where the silken eyelash lay

Too strangely still, was a soft mournfulness
Which seemed to plead for but one tear. And he
Who was so desolate must look on her,
Remembering all her swerveless truth, her calm,
And holy love; and then turn back the tide
Of swelling tenderness on his own heart;
And that heart must not break, but bear its burden.
With his firm footstep and uplifted brow
He must go forth, and, binding on his robes
And priestly mitre, meet the gaze of men
Who wondering gazed.
'T was done; and as the throng
Gathered around, with eloquence well-taught
By the deep spell of conquered agony,
He spake what was commanded.

IN THE DAYS OF OLD.

"Moses hid his face. And He (God) said, I will certainly be with thee."

"Enoch walked with God . . . . and he was not, for God took him."

"O man greatly beloved, be strong, yea, be strong!" DANIEL x. 19.

THERE were hearts of gold
In the days of old,
And lives that were grand and long,

Eyes that drooped low
'Neath a solemn glow
Of God-light that made them strong.

Yes, men were rare
And women fair
In a bright and unworn mould, —
And their words were wise,
And their prayers and sighs
God heard in the days of old.

The grand old book
With the reverend look
Which our fathers trusted well
Scorns not to speak
Of a ruddy cheek,
Nor the might of love's wondrous spell.

We smile as we stand
On a desert land
And dream of the ancient men, —
Yet sigh for the light
To our straining sight
Through life's dusk that guided then.

THE VOICE OF THE ELOQUENT.

WHICH spell of thine, O Music, say,
O'er passion and thought holds mightiest sway?
Is it the shrilling clarion note
On fields where conquering banners float,
Where the haughty heart's stern will is done,
Where life-blood flows and fame is won?
Is it the swift and joyous strain
From pillared halls and the festal train?
Or, mounts it with the solemn power
Of organ-swell in reverent hour
Where hoary minsters answering thrill,
And ages tread the deep aisles still?
Dwells there most true in nature's charm
Thy might to bless and grief disarm
Where lapsing waves on the silver strand
Throb low and sweet to an unseen hand;
Or slow the plumy pine-trees wave
To the wind's soft hymn by a forest grave;
Or where along some moonlit vale
Gurgles the song of the nightingale,
"Telling a thousand mournful things"
To the zephyrs that pause on gentle wings; —
Which of thy tones, O Music, tell,
Subdues the soul with strongest spell?

List, with the hush of yon breathless crowd!
The clear light falls on a forehead proud, —

And that eye, — what splendor is beaming thence?
The glow, the might of eloquence;
As slow its magic charm is waking,
A human voice the stillness breaking.

Have ye heard this voice in mystic power —
A godlike gift, a mortal's dower —
When it brings high hope to the sinking soul
And electric thoughts on its full tide roll,
While beneath its strength an undertone
Runs deep and clear and sweet and lone,
Revealing from the heart's pure well
Some holier truth than words can tell, —
Oh, who has heard yet never confessed,
While chained a captive his willing breast,
That of music tones that thrill to bliss
There is none so wonderful as this?

Back through the ages with their vast
Stern freedom conflicts of the past,
In council halls was felt the shock
Of mighty minds, and wildly rock
Ill-fated thrones to ruin hurled
When wise words mold anew the world.

Far down the ages dimly known
Diamonds and pearls of thought are strown.
Pause well at the Forum where Cicero spoke,
And where the brave Gracchi Rome's manhood awoke, —

Then back, till clearly the inner eye sees
The glory of Athens, her grand Pericles.
With pride of the noble in soul and mien,
He ruled for the people, content if unseen.
That Athens, the perfect, the child of his hand,
To the oncoming ages art's model might stand,
He curbed his own spirit, and, this conquest made,
A sceptre of might he wondrously swayed
Over men from the land, over men from the ships,
With "weapons of Jove" on his beautiful lips.

Tell ye of Demosthenes, later and strong,
Whose thunders to present years echo along?
Yes, tell of Demosthenes, patriot proud
Who died when his country to Macedon bowed, —
Yet he of deep eloquence, fervor and fire
Was but the true son, *another the sire.*

O mind of man, mysterious power,
That dwell'st in dust, thy dreamings tower
And dome themselves full loftily!
Upbuilt with fitting words, like stones
Polished and cut in tracery
To shape thy immaterial tones
Of grandeur and of beauty. Yet
Where lift thy matchless aisles, with fret
Of roof and mullioned arch, faint moans
As of a dreary night-wind steal
Numbing the wearied sense to feel

That even consummate templed art
No shelter gives man's homeless heart.

Ye burning words of other years
When truth was truth, and haggard fears
And all-embracing doubt, unknown
Were all undreamed, while life still sought
A something dear, hoped for, and fraught
With blessing, — ah, from zone to zone,
Ye words of fire be heard once more!
Sinai, we kneel, — we may adore —
Thy awful voice sounds from afar,
And Hermon glows with love's bright star.

ENDYMION SLEEPING.

— A SCENE most fair, the Latmos hill
From which the trees droop low and still
Upon a crystal gleaming lake —
No softest sounds the silence break
Where lies Endymion sleeping.

A white swan dreams upon the wave
That loves her snowy breast to lave, —
A temple whiter than her wing,
Stands where the palm-tree shadows cling,
And lies Endymion sleeping.

The temple's marble steps are near,
The moonlight waters shining clear,
The palm-leaf shadows softly lie, —
A soundless-soft voice calms its sigh
To leave Endymion sleeping.

The flowers are clustered at his feet,
Narcissus fair and red rose sweet,
The hyacinth dark-purpling lies —
And shine above the sad pure eyes
That light Endymion sleeping.

His dark curls on the marble rest,
His white hands on a peaceful breast,
His lips of matchless godlike mold
Smile with a joy for earth too bold, —
Ah, leave Endymion sleeping!

CLEOPATRA'S SOLILOQUY.

'T WAS more than love, O Cæsar. I lay hushed
In sleepless dream beside thy beating heart
To learn the fate of empires, and I knew
Not all the thunder gods so feared and famed
Of far Olympus, — no, nor Psyche's love,
Eros the beautiful who veiled his face
In night from eyes that to behold him pined,
Could bless me as thy presence, lofty one.

Am I, am I alone? and with thy kiss
Of parting didst thou counsel the loathed vow
To bind my life with that of the poor boy,
Young Ptolemy?
Cæsar is gone. Oh, word
Of ruin to my heart and fame! and yet
I would not have him stay and thus become
Less high, less conquering. That I saw, I won
My life's proud dream, its first and sovereign lord
Whose word can sway the world, — this joy is mine;
And had his heart been iron, each word a death,
I still had loved him; but my Cæsar was
Gracious and gentle, in his kindness great,
Sovereign beyond all thought in everything.

Lost! lost! I look before and see a path
I cannot shun, while black fiends mock at it.
My young bright womanhood must hated live,
Divorced from gladness, truth, hope, love, and light,
Or, I must die — by my own hand must die,
Before my life has grown too hateful far
That I may bear it. Not one chance remains
To change the web which the accursed ones
Have woven. The noble Cæsar would have made
My life his own, as princes should be wed
In honor and in faithfulness, but they,
Those upstart Romans, scorn the pure Greek blood
That flowed to me from just below the throne
Of mighty Macedon, — but I 'll not weep —

Nay, there is sterner work to do, — to curb
My rebel lords to a due reverence,
And keep my crown for Cæsar's son, and mine.
I will go celebrate my mock of nuptials
And hush all murmurs thus against my right
To reign in Egypt, — reign in truth I will,
And never shall a false nor rightful heir
Of all the Ptolemies usurp the place
Of my true prince, my most imperial-sired
Cæsarion, — who bounding, clinging, comes
With baby fondness to my maddened heart.
Oh! 't is too much — myself am half a child,
Yet through the long black years I nevermore
Must see the proud one, baby boy, who gave
Thy fairest life.
Nay, — there are galleys light
And strong, and the blue sea I ever love
Bears where I will. A crownèd queen has right
In foreign courts to queenly welcome, — Rome,
I will behold thy mighty hills, and him, —
And if vexed Rome and vexed Calphurnia
So vex great Cæsar that his mien is cold
And formal in my welcome, — then, ye fates,
The dagger-point's keen sympathy remains.
I 'll rend the swelling coils that prison now
This burning blood, whose crimson current glows
Too passionate beneath the burning sun
Of Egypt, — and the form he praised shall lie
Cold-pure and harmless at his pitying feet.

Perchance the hour is near, — why comes this thought?
When Cæsar too shall know the searching power
Of such sharp sympathy to cure life's ills.

THE CRUCIFIED.

Night hovered o'er the garden strange and still.
The Roman guard gathered beside the stone
Which lay upheaved defiantly, and barred
The rock-hewn tomb of Calvary. Those hours
Which ushered in the "third day" were at hand,
And still the linen folds held the pale form
Of Jesus. Death's cold seal yet pressed those lips;
But the calm holy brow was eloquent;
And as the night waned onward to its close
The sorrowing lines of that most sacred beauty
Kindled to all on which immortal eyes
Alone could look.
O Saviour, Thou art risen;
But we still trace with deepest reverent love
Thy footprints here, those hallowed scenes that tell
How far a God could stoop with purposes
Of mercy. Not as they who saw Thee once
Pale from the agony of Pilate's cross,
And touched thy pierced hands, and gently wound
Back from thy drooping head its crown of thorns,
May we bow down to worship; but our day

Of sackcloth and of silence, when amid
The ashes of a desolated life
And the strown wreck of the high-altars reared
In madness to our idols, we have learned
The pure deep lesson of humility,
Shall own thy Presence near.

Comest Thou not
To faith's sweet prayerful stillness — when the heart
Has utterance more than words, and wingèd soul
Seems half enfranchised into angel life,
Oh, then, do we not clasp thy feet, and share
The pure compassions of thy sovereign eye? —
And earth, with its cold painted brilliancies
And vapory joys, dim hope, and trustless love,
Seems far too poor one sigh or smile to win
From the high-wedded trust.

TWO HOURS FROM THE LIFE OF JULIA DOMNA,

EMPRESS WIFE OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.

I.

"It was no augur's dream.
The bright stars which adorn

The brow serene of ancient night
Wrote with their rays of living light,
'A royal child is born!' "

Thus spake one glowing morn
The Syrian maiden rare;
And to her forehead and her eye
Come earnest thoughts enkindling high, —
No crown she needs to wear

To prove how grandly there
Soul-life itself enthrones
By its own nobleness, — by right
Of a grand nature's gift of might
Which all of life enzones.

No petty king who owns
His realm by Roman grace
But Rome's great emperor has sent
And, with the stars in full consent,
Proffers their child her place.

Henceforth her footstep's trace
Shall be where Rome's behest
May prompt her warlike emperor forth
With world-wide sway to South or North,
To East or sea-bound West.

. . . . . .

II.

On a pale mother's breast
A pale young prince is lying,
Slain by an elder brother's hand,
Who in his crime could dare to stand
That mother's heart defying.

With the still dead is vying
The hue of Julia Domna's face;
But when the fratricide is gone
And Geta's look puts slowly on
The glad triumphant grace

Of one whose life apace
Is drained by fatal wound,
The mother's eye sees naught beside.
To her swift dream he has not died
Blood-drenched within the bound

Of arms that close him round —
Her dearest and her own,
With love all measureless and fond, —
She feels the solemn, sacred bond
Of motherhood alone.

She murmurs in soft tone,
As listening and not dead,
Were he, her gentle and sweet prince.

His look might any eye convince
Again with agile tread,

He must by honor led
Go forth to claim his right, —
Must wed as his young heart inclines
The last child of the Antonines
And reign in virtue's might.

Ah, peaceful second sight
For racking human woe
Just on the verge of frenzy! Read
Even from the rapt look of our dead,
It charms, it saves us so!

KING ANTHERIC'S ENVOY.

"Haste, haste, Theudalinda, the guest-cup to fill, —
Your father commands, the Envoy waits still
Whom the Lombard Autharis,* famed through the land,
Has sent to King Garribald asking thy hand.
Haste, haste, Theudalinda, 't is Monhild that calls, —
The mandate is his who is lord of these walls.

* The names are given in the verse as Gibbon gives them.

Thou knowest not wisely our feet linger still
When the stern and the strong have spoken their will."

One touch to the light golden ringlets she gave
That loved on the snow of her forehead to wave,
While earnest thought looked from the clear eyes blue,
And flushing, and paleness, the changing cheek knew.
She passed from her bower to answer the call
Of the Sire long waiting for her in his hall.

"Cease, cowardly tremors," she murmured aloud,
"Like a slave's who was born 'neath a lash to be bowed!
Autharis demands me, yet, I may love
My home and my kindred his best claim above.
I know him not, care not that warriors praise,
And for him the loud minstrels ring forth their lays;
If he is but a stern bloody tyrant, I hate —
Will spurn him though death the next hour be my fate.

"Serene to the hall of the gods let me rise,
And Odin may smile, or, the slow-beaming eyes
Of some warrior who knew how to pity and love
May be met as I pass to the palace above, —
I heard of One such, — 't was a beautiful tale," —

She raised her young face, calm, dreamy, and pale,
As a white-breasted swan in slow grace might glide,
She entered the hall of the guests in the pride
Of her beauty unrivaled whose far fame had brought
The trusted envoy of Autharis who sought
To make the rare maiden his own chosen bride, —
But, the stranger sat silent by Garribald's side.

The haughty old king of Bavaria's pride
Rose high in his bosom, and "dares he, the hound,
To believe a fairer on earth can be found!"
Was the thought quickly kindled to fire in his eye, —
But pause, — Theudalinda moves gracefully by
With the cup, borne as hostess, high-born and at ease,
To honor the guest she cares not to please.
And lo, ere he tastes it, he kneels at her feet,
And from his fixed eye steals forth hers to meet
Love, love all resistless, — the cup's golden band
Told not that he clasped it around her white hand.

The maiden looked down on the form and the face,
Low bending before her in manliest grace,
Bewildered, then quickly passed out from the hall.

Told soon to her kind foster-mother was all, —
How he, the false baron, her hand thus had pressed,
The words of his errand unspoken, unguessed;

Forgetting the king's love, by gesture and mien
He rashly had dared cause his own to be seen.
"But oh! he was noble, my good Monhild dear!
With eyes dark and deep his forehead was clear
In the beauty of Balder; and closely was curled
From lips all unrivaled I 'm sure in the world,
Not the beard of the Lombard, but, soft as brown
foam,
'T was like the eddying river of Rome."

The kind foster-mother knew not how to speak,
She kissed and soothed fondly the rose-flushing
cheek,
Half-fearing some vague nameless horror to come
From heart-choice in wooing with ruin its sum.

Below in the hall calm Garribald smiled,
The guest to the Sire bent low as a child;
And asked that his pleading might quickly be sent
To the proud gracious princess, with love reverent,
Once more the sweet light of her beauty to bring
To Autharis the Envoy, Autharis the KING;
Who will evermore honor the maiden who knew
To spurn the bold love, too hasty though true.

Thus Garribald's daughter went forth we are told
Content at the side of Autharis the bold;
And year after year as his radiant queen,
Beloved for her beauty and virtue was seen;

And when to the spirit's far shadowy shore
The valiant Autharis had passed, she still wore
The crown of the Lombards, and prized far before
Its costliest jewels in number twice ten
Its NAIL FROM THE CROSS OF THE SAVIOUR of men.

A REVERY WITH EARLY ENGLISH HISTORY.

It is not in dreamland,
It is not in sleep,
But millions pass by me;
And silence more deep
Than silence of slumber
The thronging hosts keep.

The present departing,
The past to my soul
Comes proudly, comes sadly,
All thought to control;
The mists slowly vanish,
Cloud-curtains uproll.

Back, back through the time-land
I turn to behold
Humanity's pageant
The real, the bold,

The high forms, the fair ones
  Of centuries old.

. . . . . .

'T is night, and the moonbeams
  Fall weirdly and still
On rough shaggy forest,
  On river and rill;
And Stonehenge gleams ghastly,
  With boding of ill.

Wild, fearful, the faces
  That gloomily lower
Where night-loving Druids
  Seek mystical power,
And rites all unholy
  Have sway of the hour.

Beside the dread altar
  A pale maiden stands,
Her golden hair rippling
  O'er thong-tortured hands, —
Oh! woe for the bright blood
  That gushed on the sands!

. . . . . .

From Britain the ancient
  The Cæsars are gone,
Caractacus, Vortigern,
  Vanquished pass on;

O'er Hengist and Horsa
The death-dust lies strown.

. . . . . .

Morn breaks on the hilltops,
And through the blue air
The shrines of the Christ-king
Rise grandly and fair;
And Aïdan and Cuthbert
And Bedé are there.

No more the pure bosom
Of beauty is bare
To the knife of fiend-worship;
But, earnest and rare
St. Hilda is clasping
The cross in her prayer.

Crowned Alfred too bendeth
To Him who was crowned
With thorn-wreath of sorrow
Where hills wait around
The far olden city
In mysteries bound.

THE SCRIPTORIUM.

EDWY.

In young glowing manhood
A bright form I see
Of Alfred's own lineage
For whom may not be
The right to be happy,
The right to be free.

Fair Edwy, young Saxon,
Thou droopest alone,
And dim is thy crown's light,
Grief-shadowed thy throne;
Thou askest no echoes
Of fame's trumpet tone.

The thought of thy lost bride
Insulted, maligned,
Despised and torn from thee,
To tortures consigned,
O'erwhelms with death's darkness
And frenzy combined.

ETHELGIVA.

Above a wild and lonely heath
Stern-frowned a wintry sky,
And whirled beneath was the snow's cold wreath
As the wailing blast went by.

The wailing blast from a leafless tree
Passed chill to a forehead fair,
And snowflakes be, and pearled jewelry
Both in soft-clustered hair.

Dim day went out in the darkening west,
More wildly the storm-wind rose —
Unblest, unblest, is the tender breast
That finds no home's repose!

Why strays she there? 't were dread to guess,
And strange seems there, I ween,
The bright excess of her loveliness
Like that of a sceptred queen.

A queen she was, though none had wrought
For her a diadem,
Unless far sought where a burning thought
Out-glows a flashing gem.

THE PURSUERS.

THEY come! they have found her,
The bloody fangs tear,
The hunted roe dieth
In agonies there —
O Christ of Gethsemane,
Hear her mute prayer!

O Christ of Gethsemane,
Lain on thy heart
Are the woes of long ages
For us thy keen part.
We trust that earth's anguish
Is healed where Thou art!

From the realm of the present
Past sorrows we see,
And, wronged Ethelgiva,
Most tenderly we
Will turn from red war-chiefs
To Edwy and thee.

For better is, surely,
Love's grief-frenzied dream
Than hatred of stern hearts
More cruel than gleam
The swords they dye crimson
In life's wasted stream.

ANSELM.

Anselm of Aosta
With beautiful brow
Of light like the Christ-king's,
We bless thee, even now!
Thou taughtest grand wisdom
In gentleness, thou!

No hunted hart perished
Unpitied, in vain,
At the feet of his palfrey,
Which paused on the plain
While passed a scared victim
To gladness again.

Before the Great Norman,
Pure, gentle, and true,
He stood with calm counsel;
And, wakening new,
The best of a stern heart
Smiled up into view.

Anselm of Aosta
With beautiful brow
Of light like the Christ-king's,
We bless thee, even now.
Thou taughtest grand wisdom
In gentleness, thou.

THE CRUSADES.

THE Hermit comes with fervid eye
And lifts the sacred cross on high,
His rough serge mantle girt with care,
His pilgrim foot worn gaunt and bare, —
To eastward far he points the way,
Kisses the cross and kneels to pray.

. . . . . .

Bernard with solemn voice and slow
Proclaims, "God wills it thus," and, lo!
The nations move; while far and wide
Float kingly banners in their pride.
Crowns glisten back the sunlight's beam,
Plumes wave, and starry lances gleam;
The war-horse lifts his arching neck,
And high baronial symbols deck
And cloth of gold his plaited mail.
Each strong bold charger boldly bears
A knightly form erect who wears
His armor-proof against the hail
Of battle's ringing blows
When chief to chief with brand to brand
Or lance to lance from iron hand
In awful conflict close. —
But, hushed as death's own silence now
The warriors pass with helmèd brow;

And, prouder, bolder than the rest
De Lion rides with mailèd breast,
With stalwart form and England's crest.

Earth's conquerors by land or sea,
Ye pride of war and chivalry,
Your fame once flew from shore to shore,
Your humbled dust earth finds no more, —
And if a louder trumpet note
Than ever rang across the moat
Of leaguered castle smite the tomb
To call from ages' slumbering gloom —
Not barons, kings, to fancy's ken,
But forms that once were mortal men, —
Ah! who will be the conquerors then?

BERENGARIA OF NAVARRE,

OR, THE MARRIAGE OF CŒUR DE LION.

Over the fair, the Cyprus isle
Where Aphrodite from the sea
Came floating, and her goddess smile
Brightened in flowers on shore and tree,
The sun still kindly, warmly shone,
A freshening beauty wide was strown
Though armed hosts filled the island bowers
And crushed to dust the spring-time flowers.

A mediæval pile is bright
With courtly splendor, and full light
Beams from an altar. A small form
White-robed and delicate is there
With dainty cheek and lustre warm
Of Spanish eyes, and hand so fair
To touch it scarce should mortal dare, —
Yet she, that creature of the air,
Yields it to one whose giant strength
Foes fear through Europe's breadth and length;
And though mail-glove is laid aside,
That hand is one of martial pride, —
For she is Cœur de Lion's bride.

Diamonds and gold flash back the light
From his broad breast and sword-hilt bright,
And sapphires flash his sparkling eyes;
While closely curled in beauty lies
Beneath his broidered headpiece rare
On a white brow his golden hair.
Ah, lion-heart, veiling thy might
In satin fold and mantle white!
Ah, warrior, has the spell been found
By which thy burning thoughts are bound
To gentle scenes of quiet? Nay:
Lover and poet for a day
May Cœur de Lion be, —
Then onward to the surging strife
Where death is lightly met as life

His eager way we see;
And on the fields of Palestine
He sweeps along the lengthened line
Of warring hosts, and fiercely free
Strikes for the pilgrim's shrine;
Or, reins his brave war-horse with care,
His lance firm-poised aloft in air,
And challenges each foe, —
While no dire Paynim wrath its storm
Against that towering Mars-like form
Dares hurl with fruitless blow.
But ah! erelong a prison's bound
Shall close that fearless strength around, —
And few the years now lingering
Till death shall claim the haughty king.

Within her distant abbey pile
The gentle bride of Cyprus isle
Shall kneel in saintly, shadowy stole
And weep, and pray, "God rest his soul!"
Or, standing by her open gate,
Watchful to bless the poor shall wait
With daily generous dole;
And 'midst the grateful piteous crowd
Sigh low one name, "My Richard proud, —
God rest, God rest his soul!"

THE FATEFUL HOUR.*

FIRST VOICE.

Lion of England, king,
Thy past was lived to bring
Thee to the mystic ring
Of this one hour.

For this thy lion-heart,
For this thy warlike art,
Thy fame, which may depart,
Were wrought to power.

Arise in all thy might
Up to the crowning height
Of deeds now made thy right
And service high;

Rise to thy pride of fame,
With Godfrey's carve thy name

* "The king was led by one of his train to a height from which Jerusalem could be plainly seen. With tears in his eyes, he threw down his arms, and, hiding his face with his shield, exclaimed that he who was unable to rescue was unworthy to look on the sepulchre of Christ." — *Strickland's Queens of Eng.*

"If Richard had gone forward with his accustomed bravery, the force he had would have taken the city; for Saladin, already failing in health, was absent from Jerusalem, and the small garrison, dismayed at the coming of Richard, expected to surrender." — *Old History.*

Rayed in the sacred flame
Which cannot die.

SECOND VOICE.

Nay, Richard, pause, — fame might suffice
If Godfrey's height you win, —
Though wasting oil of sacrifice
Burned his pure breast within;

And all he won from careless hands
And weak ones passed away, —
Across these chosen promise-lands
Came back the Moslem sway.

FIRST VOICE.

Richard of England, king,
Thy past was lived to bring
Thee to the mystic ring
Of this one hour.

For this thy lion-heart,
For this thy warlike art,
Thy fame, which may depart,
Were wrought to power.

Thou may'st not choose thy way —
The will thou know'st, obey,
And God, thy strength and stay
Shall ever be.

The city's towers behold,
They and the Moslem gold,
And victories untold
Are all for thee.

In spirit-strength arise,
Dash sin's cloud from thine eyes,
Strike, fearless, for the prize
That waits thee yet.

Philip is gone, — 't is well —
Not his the favoring spell, —
Thy name deep whispers tell,
Plantagenet.

SECOND VOICE.

What is the charm of this far land,
These hills reared barrenly,
This sun-scorched waste of blinding sand,
King Richard, what to thee?

What yields this land of hoary age —
This land of Palestine?
Hunger and thirst, and fever's rage
If touched the ruby wine.

In pleasant France thy duchies smile
With purple vineyards fair, —
And Philip, with his hate and guile,
Is busy, busy there.

FIRST VOICE.

Oh, lion-strength so brave,
The desert and the cave
Thy kingdom and thy grave
Should chosen be.

Vineyards, and feasts, and joy!
Let weak ones idly toy,
And the shamed hours annoy
With revelry.

Lift thou thy mailèd hand,
Victorious warrior stand
On yonder walls more grand
Than Cæsar won.

Dream not of thronging foes,
Of desert pains and woes,—
Saladin swiftly goes
Where war is done.

Thy way is smoothly cast,
Long shall thy victory last
This fateful hour once past
With strong true heart.

Alas, too weak, too weak!
Tears on a haughty cheek!—
Tancred, De Courtenay, speak,—
Nay, ye depart.

Woe for a coward choice!
Thy future has no voice
To bid thy pride rejoice,
Lion no more.

A prison's walls await,
A purchased freedom late, —
Basely to die thy fate,
For fame is o'er.

BOTH VOICES.

Thy work undone to other hands
High heaven will not assign,
Blood shall o'erquench the thirsty sands,
It shall not win the shrine.

EDWARD PLANTAGENET THE FIRST.

ENGLAND'S great Edward, knight and king
And earnest statesman, thought can bring
Once more thy stern and war-worn face,
And near thee on the canvas place
Thy Eleanor, and him, the fair,
Bright baby Edward, — nay, I dare
Not look upon that picture! Tears
Forced and prophetic, scorning fears,
O'erflow the dark and haughty eyes
Crown-shadowed. Gorgon faces steal

Across the distance. Splendors reel
Like castellated clouds and sink
In darkness, — gazers scarcely think
How bold the outlined turrets rise
Ere they have vanished. A prince dies
Dishonored, and a worthier one,
Cressy's young hero, his work done,
In sculptured marble gleaming cold,
His brave deeds by their trophies told,
Lies on his early tomb, — around,
Beyond, a darkly-closing bound
Of prison-walls. O'erwhelmed by fraud
And cruelty, proud Empress Maude,
Perished thy last Plantagenet,
Pale star in utter darkness set.*

The gateways open stand to one wide hall,
Unwelcomed and unspurned the guests come all;
King, prince, and peasant each finds ample room,
Curtained, and still, and restful, — 't is not gloom.

Life is the death, — if selfish, base,
Then all is darkness. The white brow
Lies down unsullied, and its place
Speaks but of blessing when we bow
And listen.
Thou wast like thy race,
Most Titan-like Plantagenet,

* Richard II.

Proud and invincible; and yet
Edward of England's pictured face
Wears troubled thought, and "sudden tears
Forced and prophetic scorning fears,
May well o'erflow the dark deep eyes
Crown-shadowed."
Though thy England rise
And name thee great and good and wise,
The conqueror's stain rests full on thee —
Blood, blood! Oh, may thy tears yet be
A mercy fount from justice stern
To soften judgment. Thou didst learn
In life, and from life's future borrow —
Heaven pity thee! — lessons of sorrow.

"ONCE UPON A TIME."

The stars were out, and the moon rode high
Through the sapphire arch of the midnight sky, —
But the revelers heeded not as she passed,
Though saintly sweet was the smile she cast
On lawn and forest and glassy stream,
Fairer than all the festal gleam.

'T was a stately hall of the olden time.
It had echoed oft to pleasure's chime,
And again o'er the walls were garlands fair, —
Soft wondrous music charmed the air,
And the lamps shone down on a mazy throng

That floated in music grace along.
One joined them not. With nobler mien
Than else in that gleaming hall was seen,
Sternly and silent he turned aside,
And his lips half-cursed, — was it pain or pride?
He gazed with cold and changeless eye
While the jeweled train swept gayly by.

Then came a creature young and fair, —
Almost a child, with waving hair,
With stainless forehead, and dark bright eye,
With spirit pure and lovely and high;
And the stern lips smiled, the eye grew mild, —
He spoke in tones which oft have beguiled.
To the maiden's heart stole their spell of might, —
Her eyes confessed no softened light,
Her lips smiled not, and you sought in vain
On her marble cheek for the red-rose stain.
Little they know love's fateful power
Who wear it in joy for the festal hour;
Little they know of the deep soul's strife
Who can shape to expression the wasting life.
Some hearts there are that never know
Of peace the tranquil and rippling flow, —
Their pleasure scarce can the thrilled frame bear,
Their pain is the horror of despair,
Their love is a torrent's mad excess
Which flows far more to waste than bless;
Yet with a still, unruffled mien
And ivory brow they oft are seen, —

Such was the heart of that princess fair
With the dark bright eye and silken hair.
Oh! why did he, her loftiest one,
Of the haughty glance and low deep tone,
Who had grasped all that earth can give of joy
And turned in scorn from the mocking toy —
Oh! why did he wake from their lovely rest
The jarring chords in that youthful breast?
Perchance he knew not what depths were stirred
In that reckless hour by each low-breathed word, —
Perchance he dreamed not in later years
When all had been tested more bitter than tears
That voice would come like the wintry blast,
Not to bring sweet thoughts of a springtime past;
But with cold mockery in its tone
Haunting the silent spirit lone;
While from the corse of feeling dead
Would wake self-scorn, the vampire dread.

Away with the wearying, oft-told tale, —
The novelist's dream and the poet's wail!
This heart was one of a thousand more
Which at idol fanes their wealth outpour,
Crouching the high soul God has given,
Kindred of angels and heir of heaven,
To a worship low that cheats the quest
With semblance of a portion blest, —
Its loftier claim, the Indwelling Good,
The pure heart's Light since creation stood.

THE GIFT.

It was a snow-white dove ; and as it curved
Its soft and stainless neck, and threw around
The bright quick glances of its changeful eye,
The lady watched it silently, and thought
That thus in form a spirit guest might come
From the far isles dreamed of, but never seen.

And Rudolph stood before her. There was bound
A slight and silken baldric on his breast,
And a chased hunting-horn, and wavy hair
Lay carelessly pressed back as he had come
From woodland wandering.
O'er that smooth brow
Had passed the balmy and unruffling breath
Of but some twenty summers, — but the eyes,
Deep-veiled by long dark lashes from her sight
When Constance came, were lit with fire and pride,
And the stern haughty mold of all his features
Had graced a high-born Roman in the age
Of Cæsars.
The white dove was beautiful,
But as she careless held against her vest
Its pearly form, that calm-eyed lady's mien
Grew troubled ; for she knew that while her life
Was fading, and a shadow from the wing of time
Had touched the brightness of her beauty,

The first proud passionate love of a deep heart
Was hers alone. . . . Lifting the snowy dove
Toward the Italian heaven, she gently threw
It off from her white hand, — to freedom's flight.

THE BETROTHAL RING OF ST. CATHERINE.

A MAIDEN sat in the glowing morn,
And wove her garland fair
Of leaves and buds and opening flowers, —
And her thoughts were a wordless prayer.
The King came near — He wore no crown —
What joy can one moment bring!
"Be mine," He said, and his voice was sweet, —
"Take from me this betrothal ring."

She went her way as a priestess robed,
Calm splendor serened her brow;
Nor to humbler joys and meaner loves
Might her sealed young spirit bow.
Yet her step grew faint on a desert path
Where she saw no sheltering wing, —
The King stayed long, and, — oh, bitter pain!
Lost was the betrothal ring.

She sank down lowly in deepest night
Where the maiden once sat in the morn,

And tears wet the garland, all broken and dim,
As memory whispered forlorn.
Then One came near in robes of light, —
'T was the glorious, radiant King!
He breathed not of wrath, but graciously gave
Anew the betrothal ring.

"Wait, calmly wait, my loved, my bride,"
His kind voice murmured low, —
"Thy richest treasures of life and soul
Must be wrought by a process slow.
Wait, calmly wait, in truth and love
Till thee to my home I bring;
Then shalt thou know an unmeasured trust
Was this, thy betrothal ring."

SAWDA'S DREAM.

She nursed his child *
And loved her well,
Bound to the sire
By riveless spell.

He loved not her,† —
She did not weep;
Her own heart's love
'T was joy to keep.

* Fatima.

† Sawda was Mahomet's unloved wife, — the only unloved one.

Sundered afar,
  In visions came
The palm-like form,
  That eye of flame.

Those dark, deep eyes
  That burned and gleamed
'Neath turbaned brow —
  Ah, fondly dreamed —

Looked kind on her, —
  And, seeking rest,
The Prophet's head
  Lay on her breast.

"THE LITTLE QUEEN."

A mistake with regard to Isabella of Valois, wife of Richard II. of England, is gathered from Shakespeare, where she is made to use language which could only be possible for a matron of mature years.

Richard, being required to marry that the direct royal line of Plantagenet might last, selected the most fair and good of the fair daughters of Charles VI. and his queen Isabeau. When his ministers objected to the youth of the princess, a child of nine years, the king replied, "It is a fault which will daily grow less." We may conclude that he wished, while caring for the beautiful child as for a sister, to give his own heart the time to forget the loss of his first beloved and excellent queen, Anne of Bohemia. The king, at the time of his second marriage, was twenty-eight years of age.

The love which gradually developed between Richard II. and Isabella of Valois was a thing delicate and lovely among the loves of earth. The memory of his beautiful face, his refined tenderness, and his cruel fate, made the child-widow averse to the utmost persuasion of Henry IV. and his warlike son, then Prince of Wales, to remain in England and again be England's Queen. She died at the early age of twenty-two years.

(LADY DE COURCY SPEAKS.)

"SWEET Queen and Princess Isabel,
Now leave thy harp, I pray,
Before the morning hours are passed
The King will come to-day.
When earliest matin chants were played
I saw, where the sunrise shone
Across his favorite colonnade,
King Richard stand alone
In his mantle with its ermine white,
And he waved his hand with a smile most bright
To say he would see his bride.
Now come from lessons, my Lady Queen,
He loves thy beauty in jewel sheen —
Leave harp and books aside.

"I will robe thy form in pale-rose silk, —
Thy flesh as the spotless, creamless milk
Is wholly and sweetly fair.
That thy foot shall shame a fairy sprite,
Thy girdle the slender wood-nymph's bright
Will need no earnest care.

Thy curls shall be held in the pearl's soft grasp,
Thy sleeve shall have a diamond clasp,
And filmy lace shall fall,
A modest charm, a witching spell,
That suits thy virgin youth full well,
A white mist over all;
And when with pleased surprise
The king shall see his jewel set
In jewels, he will all forget
In one glance of thy radiant eyes.
The earnest truth, the childlike light
Shall seem than jewels far more bright."

King Richard came, and a gentle smile
Played o'er his lips at the pretty style
Of his baby queen with the black bright eyes
In the ivory field that around them lies.
He gallantly lifted the lace-robed form
And kissed the red lips soft and warm,
Then playful knelt to the jeweled hand
And said, "Is your will, my Lady grand,
To smile on my heart to-day?
Will you sing a song, and show your power
To wile me away to a magic bower
And treasures of genii display?"

"I will do just this, my king and lord,
I will lead you safe through watch and ward,

I will show you many a precious thing
Which none from genii realms can bring, —
Nor need we leave fair Windsor's halls,
We may find our quest within these walls.
First let us go to the cloisters dim,
I would sing a sacred morning hymn, —
The brightest hours will brighter be
For a worship thought's pure ministry."

The hymn was sung, and its cadence mild
Repeated soft the joyful child
As they wandered through the ancient tower
Historic still of Norman power.
Erelong they reach the chosen place
Where, later, dwelt her royal grace,
The brave and proud Elisabeth;
And where their first of mortal breath
Drew princesses and princes fair, —
And some to sigh in sorrow there.

Young Isabella sought no sign
Of the coming great or joyless line
Of England's royalty;
But, gayly bounding, she said, "I 'll hide, —
King Richard, follow and find thy bride, —
May it not weary thee!"
He saw her glide with a smile away,
And quickly followed in mood as gay
Where, courteous in parting, with graceful sway

He saw her white arm tossed.
He passed through stony arches old, —
Their shadows fell like sudden cold
On pulses that brooked not the stern and drear,
But were true to love, and knew not fear.
Where could the princess fly so fast?
Had she from earth forever passed
She could not seem more lost.
A look of pain on his features fell,
He called, "Come back, my Isabel!"
And the sorrow of the tone
Brought soon from shadows far and dim
The welcome joy-bird back to him,
The dove which too far had flown.

He drew her closely to his side
And murmured, "Say, my fairy bride,
When a few more years are past
Will you love me true and love me well?
Can it be, my winsome Isabel,
I shall gain thy heart at last?"

She raised her look with still surprise, —
But a smile soon dawned in the earnest eyes;
She spoke in gentle flattering grace,
Playfully scanning his form and face.

"Thine eyes are clear as the morning light,
Thy cheek rose-hued, thy brow is white,

Thy teeth are perfect, thy lips a spell
To steal the heart of Isabel;
Thy ermined mantle is gracefully worn —
Thou art king of England this merry morn,
Thou art good and kind as a brother dear, —
Why should I not love thee? never fear.
And now go hide in the loneliest spot, —
And see if thy little queen finds thee not."

"Nay, talk not, sweet, of lonely places,
Nor of hiding away from best-loved faces.
Let us walk where toward the sparkling river
The gallery hangs, and in sunlight and breeze
We can see on the shore the emerald trees
With joy and thankfulness quiver.
Thy hand on my arm, thy smile in my heart,
I will dream that a king in life's gladness has part —
Let us look on the fair-flowing river."

Ah! leave them now in their stainless love
While yet their sky shines blue above, —
The one who of sorrow knows no dream,
And the one who forgets it awhile in the beam
That brightens o'er him and the river.
Yes, leave them, nor think of coming hours
When another shall claim the king's high bowers:
Leave them, nor draw the veil aside
From Richard's fate, — his brave child-bride
Shall be true to her heart's last quiver.

THE PRISONER'S WAKING THOUGHTS.

"Ah, who can name them all, the ills of humanity, in their manifold pale dispensations? There are crime and sickness, the shriek of despair, and the long deep silent torture." — BREMER.

THE wintry morn once more
With dreary, chilling, and unwelcome glare
Finds the barred horror of my prison-door,
Where lurks despair.

Too soon thou tak'st thy flight,
Oblivious sleep, this wasted life's best boon,
And thou, O kindly-shadowing night,
Far, far too soon.

Though weary dreams must lie
Where lies this weary head, and lurid gleams
Flit o'er my sleep's serenest sky,
They still are dreams:

But morning brings worse dole
Of maddening thoughts with its ungentle beam
Which tell in anguish on my soul,
They are no dream.

Without, the northern blast
Sweeps whirling on, and from each desolate bough
The last frail withered leaves are cast
Unpitied now.

Fixed is dire winter's reign, —
Each pale untimely flower from the cold skies
Shrinks low to the unsheltering plain —
No more to rise.

Bright visions cherished long,
Youth's holy hope and aspiration high,
Beneath worse storm of hate and wrong,
Ye, too, must die.

"THE FAIREST THING TO MORTAL EYES." *

"My lady, my lily," — ah, where am I now?
The breath of thy lips touched light on my brow.
But thy filmy robe floated away through the night,
"Thou fairest thing to mortal sight."

'T was a dream, yet so lovely she bent o'er my sleep
I waken to bless her, I waken to weep;

* Charles, the poet Duke of Orleans, was by order and will of Henry V. of Lancaster consigned to a severe imprisonment of twenty-two years in the Tower of London, for no fault but his virtues, added to the fact that he was second in heirship to the crown of France; and the other fact, it may be, that for one year he was the husband of the beautiful Isabella of Valois, whom Henry, as vainly as persistently, had sought to win.

Orleans came into the hands of Henry V. as prisoner of war at Agincourt, and all ransom for him was refused.

The imprisoned Duke mourned for the dead Princess by the titles quoted in the poem.

Peace hushes my spirit, my lone heart still sighs,
"Thou fairest thing to mortal eyes."

"My lady, my lily," thy beautiful form
No grief can restore me, no tenderness warm;
Cold, lonely, and silent and sacred it lies,
And seen no more by mortal eyes.

She loved him, ah, truly, her Richard, the king.
She wept when our kindred, unresting, would bring
The pale royal flower to my bosom a bride, —
They brought her, and here on my bosom she died.

King Richard had won her with saintliest art
That spared the sweet form while gaining the heart, —
She turned to his memory, the martyred, the dead,
As a youth-dream unfinished, a page left unread.

Fierce Henry, in vain that bold hand of thine
Was laid on the outermost gate of the shrine
Where thy victim could dwell love-remembered each hour
Beyond thy fell hate and the craft of thy power.

I loved her, — I loved her, the truthful and fair,
For her Henry's prison could willingly dare, —
If I die here, what sorrow? my heart daily dies
For my lady the rarest to mortal eyes.

ELISABETH.

GREAT virgin queen,
Thy weary name
Should rest with fame,
Far from the scene
Where owl dominion
Of blind opinion
For faults will glean.

We cannot say
Thy lily hand
Ne'er moved the brand
In fearful way,
Despite its beauty
And sovereign duty,
'Neath passion's sway.

We will not dream
Thy woman's heart
Held light its part
To quench love's beam, —
Love vainly loyal,
Love high and royal,
A varied gleam.

Yet all must own
This ever true,

Thy England grew
Around thy throne
And life all glowing, —
While peace bestowing
With welcome tone.

CONSTANTINE THE ELEVENTH.

Alone in a winter midnight
Which solitude made drear,
I read from history's volume
With the frequent starting tear.

Without my study windows
The pine-trees, sighing low,
Kept time to my mournful musing
O'er a page of human woe.

It told of him, the latest,
The brave, sad Constantine,
Whose bright imperial eagles
Veiled low their golden sign,

Whose crown of unmeasured sorrow
Came to his brow unsought, —
Its splendor, its shame, and its torture,
In the shadows of destiny wrought.

Oh! grand were the forms lowly kneeling,*
The last of the worthy and brave,
In the Church of St. Sophia
Faith's emblems that "last night" to crave.

Oh! the wail of despair from his palace!
Oh! the grief of his deep-heaving breast,
As Constantine rode through the darkness,
The lost one — the doomed, — yet the blest!

His Georgian princess is waiting
For his galleys to come o'er the sea
And bear her in joy and in beauty
His empress bride to be;

And noble hearts gather around him,
Steel-true to his latest breath, —
No change can seal him a tyrant,
And ages shall honor his death.

. . . . . .

I started — my lamp burned no longer,
Raindrops plashed without on the snow, —
I blessed them that they were weeping
For a grief of long ago.

* "They wept, they devoted their lives. The Emperor paused a few moments in his palace, which resounded with cries and lamentations. Mounting a horse, he then rode through the city, visiting the guards and watching the enemy." — GIBBON.

ORION.

He comes when comes the storm wind's wrath
To the ocean-wanderer's way;
He moves on his stern and awful path
When the wrecking surges sway;
And yet he seems an envoy rare
From all that is holy and high,
And we list for the message his bright stars bear
In the hosts of the nightly sky.

O wouldst thou speak! thou who hast been
With the march of the nameless years, —
Thy searching eye has surely seen
What we dream of with hopes and fears.
Thou mayest be near to the land of wings
With knowledge full-orbed thy estate,
Mayest echo the lofty song that rings
Through Alcyone's pearly gate.

O wouldst thou speak! but our eager thought
Unanswered trembles back,
Mysterious space is thine, and naught
Unveils thy boundless track.
Vast, silent splendor, shining still
O'er earth with its life and death,
We know thou art his whose regnant will
Makes peaceful our daily breath.

Thy starry "bands" flash diamond light
To the toiling restless brain,
We see thee changeless, calm, and bright
Beyond earth's power or pain;
And we think of priceless gifts, like thee
That neither fade nor die,
But smile above time's troubled sea
Till night and shadows fly.

Thou art an emblem of all things rare
And best to our human thought,
Strength, constancy, truth, are surely there
With thy heraldry inwrought;
For thy watching form has never failed
Its heaven-appointed hour
Since first the hills the sunlight hailed
Or the moon lit the forest bower.

Once gazed on thee clear glorious eyes
Whose light to earth is lost,
As thine when cloud mists darkly rise
And our way by storms is crossed.
The clouds pass by, and thy silver ray
Is part of a purer even, —
So the proud light veiled from our shadowed way
May glow once more in heaven.

OUR COUNTRY'S DEAD.

Ah! gently name them, — that noble band.
Brave manly forms are sleeping,
And brows once grand with kingly thought
Cold blood-stained graves are keeping.

They went from the halls of learning fair,
Calm sage and young aspirant,
From the statesman's desk and the temple gate, —
Hands which ne'er struck with tyrant.

Their blood, their lives, they valued not
In truth's great cause contending, —
Wrong was the foe they sternly fought,
Justice and right defending.

They fought, they fell, and vacant mourn
Their dear and honored places, —
More dimly yet lone hearth-fires burn
Unlit by cherished faces.

And he,* our truest, worthiest name
Still in strange heart-throbs spoken, —
Ah, vain our grief! How sadly vain
Each monumental token!

* Lincoln.

He sleeps in dust whose lofty soul
Bore a dark, heavy burden, —
And for that wasting toil of years
The traitor's blow his guerdon.

No, no! not thus — not thus the doom
Our deathless martyr beareth, —
Eternal years alone can sum
The jewel crown he weareth.

A noble band are our country's dead, —
Brave manly forms are sleeping;
And they who sowed in deathless hope
Have passed to glorious reaping.

A FRAGMENT.

THERE was a being once —
My brother? yes, I name him so.
A mind
Free, self-dependent, high, had stamped command
On all the marble of a regnant brow;
And seemed his eye like an unfathomed wave,
A full dark wave, by the sweet morning beam
Of warm and pure affections kindled. It
Was beautiful.
Oh, I have seen him stand
With that mysterious light the spirit sheds

When, the dull clay o'ermastering, it asserts
Its own unearthly lineage and trust,
Paling his features; and a thousand gazed
With pausing breath, and life-pulse wildly stirred
As by a trumpet's tone. And soon I marked
A tear, strange visitant, steal to stern eyes,
While in a voice low, musical and deep
As is the flow of an earth-hidden river,
New thrilling thoughts, fraught with a chastening
power,
Sank to the searchless caves of each hushed life
To linger there forever.

It is blest
Here in this mocking world, where even love,
Which some esteem a brimming cup of joy,
Tasted, can scarce be told from bitterness —
It is most blest if mind, if reasoning thought,
May bend them too in all the heart's quick homage.
I proudly loved. Beneath the one broad bough
Of a rent oak I rested fearlessly
Nor dreamed of darkened sky nor hurrying sweep
Of the cold, blighting north-wind, — yet they came.
He drooped — even he — and wearily lay down
In the damp churchyard; and he would not speak,
Though in the very tone once loved I breathed
His name, and kept long vigil drear and cold
Mantled in more than graveyard darkness.

Yet once — oh, once he came! It was not there
Where boughs wave calmly and the senseless clods

Press on the pulseless heart; but I had strayed
Along the fair aisle of a sanctuary,
And there, consumed of all the wretchedness
Within me, stood among the worshipers.

Low tones, sweet, sacred, solemn, rose and sank, —
Then rose and swelled to music such as might
Be heard in heaven, earth's deepest sorrowing prayer
Blent with an angel anthem. Swiftly then
The tight black cord of selfish pain was riven
And my free spirit knelt before its God.

Thoughts came, white-winged and softly beautiful
As altar doves, shedding their light around.
And he too came. Unseen by other eyes
He brightly stood beside me, while his hand
Lay on my aching forehead, — never since
The kindling fever of the heart's unrest
Has mounted there.

BURIED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.*

Over his mantled breast, turf lie thou lightly, —
Stranger hands smooth it, oh! gently and rightly, —
Beautiful boughs should wave over his resting,
Sunbeams he loved should the scene be investing.

* The Wilderness.

By our young soldier's grave breathe a deep prayer,
Heaven's peace enclasp him now, saved from all care;
War of its tumult wild leaves not a seeming —
Hushed is the throbbing pulse, voiceless his dreaming.

Soft on the marble brow dark hair is lying,
Slow from the placid lips memories are dying, —
Soul of the hero's form, where art thou straying?
Hearest thou a wondrous harp — or the boughs swaying?

Over his mantled breast, turf lie thou lightly,
Far from this earthly scene, spirit soar brightly,
Low stoop the angel guard, hymning sweet morrow,
Child of the Lord of life, thou hast no sorrow!

THE VOYAGERS.

This poem was suggested by a remark as follows: —

"I sometimes think of the temptations of life as *islands*, where we are allured to stop, and relinquish the grand object of our quest, the land of Beulah or union with God."

The first island passed by the voyagers of the poem is *Worldliness;* the second, *Worldly Pleasure.*

They are then allured by the rich and varied voices of Science, Learning, and Poetry to the high rocky island of intellectual *Self-Worship.* Under this island is the dangerous cavern of *Unbelief.* The example portraits it is unnecessary to recognize.

The storm represents the outbursting malice of the soul-tempter; after which the weary voyagers are wafted to Beulah's Isle, close by the Eternal Shore.

I.

FREIGHTED with hope, unwearied and unworn,
A venturous band o'er smiling seas were borne.
A venturous band in youthful presence rare,
And clad for voyaging with shrewdest care,
At morn unmoored their new and brave trireme.
Each graceful form erect, they boldly seem
To grasp for life or death the ready oar
Ere drawn the vigorous strokes that spurned the shore.
No galley slaves were these, chained to a task,
Who vainly for heaven's light of beauty ask, —
But freeborn souls to one great purpose given,
A purpose like the vaulted skies unriven.
Sweet, full, and clear arose their parting song,
Which shoreward rocks in echoes still prolong.

AWAY.

Away, away to the unknown land,
Wherever its bright hills lie, —
To the gleaming founts and the golden strand —
Away, away to the wondrous land —
Strong oars, and steady eye!

Away! before us the white dove flies,
And signals are shining fair,

Bright banners that waving, floating, rise
Till they seem white clouds of the summer skies,
Love's wordless meaning there.

Away, away from the haunted isles
Where the High-king dwelleth not,
Where comes no light of his greeting smiles,
But a siren song the ear beguiles,
And dark is the wanderer's lot!

Away, away, while the life-bells toll, —
Listen, and hear them say
That vain is the vision, and false is the goal
Which meets not the pleading and sigh of the soul;
Away, to life's home, away!

Onward they passed amid the waters blue,
As if with unseen wings their swift ship flew, —
And soon they marked, a slow mist swept away,
That on their left a long low island lay.
Unnumbered ships were anchored at its side,
And countless throngs beyond might be descried,
A city's walls, too, plainly might be seen,
And from those walls — no grateful pause between,
Stole out a busy hum, a restless clang, —
The voyagers swept on, and gladly sang.

No tempting lure to young and guileless souls
Are the world's thronging marts where ever rolls

The deep and sullen tide of selfish thought, —
Where conscience, pity, love, are sold and bought,
Where nature's purer voices all are hushed, —
Where God is forgotten, and hearts are crushed.

II.

Erelong the sun rose high with fervid heat, —
The rowers paused just where a cool retreat,
A beauteous isle lay close beside their track, —
It seemed lost Paradise slow-floating back.
Green, velvet lawns for weary feet were there,
Leaves rustled music to the sunbright air,
On fairy arches graceful garlands hung,
Light creeping plants round sculptured vases clung,
Statues and bowers, and gorgeous flowering trees
Threw out a halo on the clasping seas;
And on the shore, close by the waters cold,
Was spread a rich pavilion, all of gold
And royal purple wrought. Beneath was one
In kingly robes at ease reclining. None,
Save maidens strangely beautiful and fair,
With pearl-bound tresses of long wavy hair,
Were lingering near him. His averted face
The voyagers saw not, but marked the grace
Of a slight hand, white as the lily's whiteness,
Glowing with gems of matchless diamond brightness.

With trailing oars, with thoughts and eyes intent,
Nearer their floating prow and nearer went

Until a heaving wave with gentle guile
Stranded it fully on the ocean isle.
The kingly form slowly his head upraised,
And turning with fixed face in silence gazed.
That face! ah, who on it would look again? —
So haggard, pale, as with despair or pain!
Though fiery light lay in the sunken eye,
'T was light on wreck, revealed more fearfully.

In blank amaze the youthful band draw near.
A creeping horror seems almost a fear,
Until a voice, low, tremulous, and weak,
Grown old before its time, was heard to speak.
"This is the treacherous isle of Pleasure; fly —
Fly while you may, ere you are chained — to die!"

With deepest pity moved, "And go thou too,"
Orestes gently said, "for it is true
A land is found where tortured souls may rest,
A land where mercy dwells and love is blest;
That peaceful land we seek, beyond the waste
Of ocean, — there no danger lurks — oh, haste!"
And gathering near, low-toned with earnest care,
Young lips breathed out their song like humble
prayer.

Hushed grew the notes, for bitter, bitter pain
Convulsed those pallid features, — "it is vain —
Too late — the winecup, Myrrha!" and he tried

To touch the golden cup once more, — but died;
And royal hands in mocking jewels drest
Sank, pale and pulseless, on a pulseless breast.

Sadder and wiser, on the waves once more,
The voyagers give thanks, with lifted oar;
And frequently, with chastened lips, they say
The watchword of their song, "Away, away!"

III.

Steals from afar a music strange and sweet, —
Quick-listening ears strain tensely still to greet
The wandering notes. Is it the welcome home?
Are they in sound of harping from the dome
Of far-sought mansions? No! — above, around,
Before them and behind them wakes the sound
Bewitching and bewildering, — and, listen!
A piercing sadness bids the teardrop glisten.
Ah! haunting melody, too sweet for earth,
Too sad for heaven, whence hadst thou thy weird birth?

They had not swerved to right nor left their track,
Nor with spent force nor carelessly turned back,
When, close-revealed to their astonished gaze,
Veiled in a robe of purple-golden haze,
An island stood, rock-girt and mountain-crested;
And from its beetling crags which the waves breasted

Hung clustering vines; and foliage rich and rare
Of high majestic groves rose here and there.
Amidst them beings moved, and wings seemed glancing,
Trumpets, and plumes, and banners seemed advancing.
Naught could the voyagers know, for a rich maze
Grew all things through that gorgeous-purple haze.

With impulse deep each mind essays to bring
Back from a brief and troubled wandering
The thoughts which ever can full brightly wing
Life with undying gladness; but, lo, now
A rushing galley just across their bow,
Sweeping to foam the waters, dashed its prow.
Within it rose a form, erect and bold, —
His gleaming forehead a bright history told
Of thought's all-wondrous power. His graceful hair
Fell back in clustered curls from temples fair
As, oarless, helmless, on his dazzling way,
His haughty mien, though silent, seemed to say:
If as a master I my hand shall lay
Upon the "ocean's mane," it will obey.

To the veiled island his bright darkening eye
Looked forth as might a conqueror's — but why
That sudden veering? Has remorseless, dire
Though unseen fate tracked him with stealthy ire?

Alas! alas! for now the voyagers mark
A vast and deep-mouthed cavern yawning dark
Beneath the vine-wreaths of the magic isle;
And to it tending, like some fatal wile,
A swift, resistless current. He is there,
The proud, fair, fearless masker. Vain the prayer
The trembling voyagers breathed, — he passed from sight
Within the rocky cavern black as night.

Sad were the young bright brows low-drooping o'er
The hands which grasped the pausing oars once more;
But soon another wanderer passed before
Their loitering way. Not proud and bold the glow
Of his pale, chiseled features, — one might know
Naught save soul pain could waste the cold cheek so.
A shadow raven-black, a fearful thing,
Sat on his shallop's prow with folded wing.
O dark and dying spirit! yet the light
Of genius, rare and beautiful and bright,
Beamed in his downcast eye. Deep pity shook
Each gazer's heart, as wrapping o'er his breast
With a dark mantle's fold he slowly took
His devious way — oh! might it be — to rest.
Wrung with sad doubt, the voyagers wildly cried,
"Father in heaven, save from the cavern tide!"
They turned in haste to shun the dangerous spot, —
Again in fear they look, they see him not.

Then low each voice as with concerted thought
Joined, by a deep impulse divinely taught,
Each other, thus: "Never my dwelling be
In realms where worship finds no Deity, —
Where man, poor favorite of a passing hour,
Builds tinsel shrines and claims his meagre dower
Of gifts and incense till another near,
With gaudier tinsel and no virtuous fear,
Passes and spurns him, — while earth's myriads pine
With lingering hopes that more and more decline;
And in life's waste the shallow cisterns burst
All-vainly trusted for their spirit thirst."

Away, away, while the life-bells toll, —
Listen, and hear them say
That vain is the vision, and false is the goal
That meets not the pleading and sigh of the soul —
Away — to life's home — away!

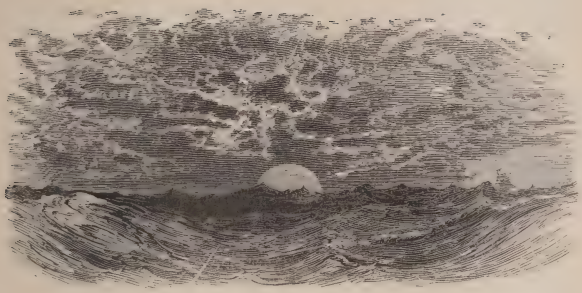
To the land where are no weeping eyes,
Where death no more is found —
Where, under the pearly pitying skies,
All pain is lost, all sorrow flies,
And the key-notes of being sound!

Away, away to the wondrous land
Where our hopes and wishes stray —
To the gleaming founts and the golden strand —
Away, away to the unseen land —
To the Beulah land away!

Away! Before us the white dove flies,
And signals are shining fair,
Bright banners that waving, floating, rise
Till they seem soft clouds of the summer skies,
Love's wordless meaning there.

"Speed ye, brave voyagers, to find the land
Of 'gleaming fountains and the golden strand'
Which ye are seeking with so earnest mien!
Is it so fair? have ye, — ah, who have seen?"
Thus mocked a half-heard voice through waves or air
And bade the voyagers of foe beware.
They turned their eyes where lay their compass true
Pointing still onward, and in vigor new
Bent to their oars; then with assurance bright
They said, "At evening time it shall be light."

But, lo! instead of light, a darkness crept
Along the waters. Slowly onward swept
And heavily the growing waves before
A dread advancing tempest.
More and more
Upreared the foam-capt surges, till a whirled
Chaos of elemental strife unfurled
Its ensigns, and fierce winds and blinding spray
Breasted and tossed and maddened round their way.



AFTER THE STORM.

Now shall true hearts grow weak and feebly shrink
From the wild terrors, then forever sink?
Shall the brave voyagers their trust deny,
And back to Pleasure's isle for shelter fly?
They only grasp their oars with deeper care
And raise their thoughts to heaven with wordless prayer.
Safely they floated, as the ancient ark,
For standing there within their favored bark
When night sank on the ocean, was a bright
Peace messenger, and made the darkness light;
And peace was breathed to each tired voyager's breast
While 'neath the angel's wing they sank to rest.

IV.

Far was their sailing ere the morning broke,
By might of heavenly ministry. They woke
With anchor dropped in a clear circling bay,
Whose lucid waves in slow sweet music play
On the bright pebbles of a fairer shore
Than they, except in dreams, had seen before.
Green graceful slopes led upward from the beach,
Varied with groves, far as the eye could reach;
And midst the sylvan beauty of the scene
Distant uprose a lofty fountain's sheen.

A form drew near with white-browed thoughtful face,
And clad in robe of full and stainless grace, —
He turned him to the shore and raised his hand
In courteous welcome.
Soon beside him stand
The voyagers who, by their looks besought
Answer to all the mystery of their thought.

With smiling speech the stranger answered: "No:
To reach the 'Father's house' you still must go
Out on the waters one brief voyage more;
But then the Father's barge will touch this shore
And safe will be the convoy. This fair isle
Is Beulah, calm in heaven's unceasing smile,
Where weary voyagers find welcome rest
And learn the one pure language of the blest.

"In the bright land of 'mansions' fountains flow
Whose new sweet waters earth may never know;
But sometimes to fair Beulah floateth o'er
The gleaming pearl light of that other shore;
And shine the crystal sea, and life's far river, —
Praises eternal be to Him, the Giver!

"Come now with me to our high fountain. There
We draw our life, and gladly learn to wear
Even as a garland the Great Father's will, —
We touch its waters and our pulses thrill

With rapturous joy; while all our robes grow white
Beneath the benediction of its light."

As they draw near more frequently they see
The blest inhabitants pass courteously.
Fair white-souled maiden friends with arms entwined
Move slowly in sweet converse. Peaceful mind
Looks out from every eye, and oft a face
Is fraught with meanings of unearthly grace
On which some far-off glory seems to shine —
A light, a crystal beauty all divine.

That wondrous Fountain! lo, each voyager stands
Beside it with upraised and clasping hands.
The grand majestic cross uplift in air
Bears not the stainless victim suffering there.
Its rugged arms a loved memorial seem,
O'erhung, as in the beauty of a dream,
With passion-flower. Close by its foot upsprung,
High and afar in sparkling currents flung,
The hallowed fount, — one half in diamond light,
One half to crimson flushing. From the bright
Clear wealth of living waves no marble rim
Turned back the eager step that sought its brim;
But golden sands, pearl-sprinkled, led the way
Where even an infant's feet may safely stray.

Thou, sacred Fountain, into crimson blushing
For man's deep shame, within thy Presence hushing
My spirit kneels. Strength in the place of weakness,
Warmth over all thought's realm of dreary bleakness,
Light through the darkest clouds still softly shining,
Immortal hope around death-sorrow twining, —
These are thy gifts, — Thine, Living Fountain, Thine,
Redeemer, Saviour, — ours! and yet Divine!

LET ME WEEP.

"The broken and the contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Yes, let me weep, — it soothes my heart
When wearied and oppressed, —
Vain hopes and earth-born joys, depart —
Oh, let me weep, and rest!

Yes, let me weep; and the earth-stain
Is gently borne away, —
The stain infixed by wrong and pain
That hides the soul's pure ray.

Yes, let me weep; for then arise
Within my troubled breast
Faith through the world's Great Sacrifice,
And love that giveth rest.

MY "ANGEL OF THE COVENANT."

"Ah, blessed vision!"

O Angel of purity, Angel of light,
The gleam of thy wings o'er life's terrible night
Has passed, and I worshiped thy beautiful form
Which lighted the darkness, and banished the storm!

O Angel of purity, Angel of light,
Than snows whirled around Thee thy cheek was more white,
Thy look was too holy for mortal to see, —
Thine eyes sadly drooping, I knew mourned for me.

O Angel of purity, Angel of light,
In the dust I am weeping, — Thou sacred and bright,
Forsake not my pathway, oh, never, nor now!
But lay the white death-snow in peace on my brow!

O Angel of purity, Angel of light,
Let me follow Thee far ere Thou passest from sight, —
Let me fly from the danger, the doubt, and the pain,
Let me win from thy presence soul-gladness again!

PURITAN

AND

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE WHITE SHIELD'S MOTTO.

"Thee, ever Thee."

In life's new morning how the sparkling eye,
The stainless forehead and the glowing cheek
Grow brighter still with joy, and kindle high
In wakening thought the lips know not to speak!
The waving woods, the soft and sunlit air,
The varied music of the silver sea,
All, all speak raptures to the spirit fair,
And bid it worship Thee, Creator, Thee.

Firm manhood comes, and the instructed mind
Moves to one mastering sway, — a work is given,
An earnest work its goal and joy to find
Where o'er it lies the dawning smile of heaven.

Far in youth's beaming past he gathers light
To mingle with a splendor yet to be;
Within, without, he finds a blest birthright, —
Life's service-love to Thee, its Sovereign, Thee.

Sorrow has found his pathway. One by one
The music voices of his home are still,
And hollow, strange, upon his own hearthstone
His single footstep sounds with shuddering thrill.
No more the heart may strive to all restrain
Its sense of desertness, nor from it flee, —
Whence shall refreshing come as summer rain?
From Thee, O Crucified, from Thee!

Death's icy arm enclasps the form of clay,
The weary heart-throbs rise more faintly slow;
But soft and clear on the pale features play
Joy-lights transcending all youth's raptured glow.
The dreaded way has grown a shining gate
With beauty garlanded, by which to free
The soul too brightly filled on earth to wait
By thoughts of Thee, O Glorified, of Thee.

THE PURITAN MOTHER'S LESSON.

You are looking around you, my darlings,
On the world as it sheens to the eye,
And you deem there are wondrous flowers,

And gems, for your seeking that vie.
You reach eager hands out, my darlings,
To grasp those treasures so dear, —
But list to her whisper who loves you,
You never will gain them here.
Look away, look to heaven, my darlings,
You never will find them here.

Young companions come trooping, my darlings,
Before you in beauty and mirth,
And you dream of sweet joyous friendship
To gladden your pathway on earth.
You dream of friendship, my darlings,
That knows not of failing nor fear, —
But list to her whisper who loves you,
You never will find it here;
Look away, look to heaven, my darlings,
You never will find it here.

You pass by the gateway, my darlings,
That leads to some beautiful home,
Soft quiet sleeps there in the shadows, —
You think peace and love cannot roam.
This, this is earth's sweetest dream, darlings,
This home-dream of joys never sere, —
But list to her whisper who loves you,
You never will find it here.
Look away, look to heaven, my darlings,
You never will find it here.

Yet grieve not and fear not, my darlings,
When false lights shine dim on the past;
There are beauty and truth all unmeasured
Which may surely be won at the last.
"Come to me" is the language, my darlings,
Of *Him*, the all-perfect and fair;
He points us to love-lighted mansions, —
And oh, He will meet with us there!
Look away, look to heaven, my darlings,
All blest dreams are waiting you there.

THE GARDEN PRAYER OF THE CHILDREN.

AN INCIDENT.

LOUISA.

THERE are beautiful tints in the morning sky, —
I love them well;
There are birdie songs in the tree close by, —
Of joy they tell.

GENEVRA.

There are whispers sweet in the breezy air, —
How deep their tone!
God's voice — I seem to hear it there,
Hushing my own.

LOUISA.

O sister, let us kneel and pray
While He is near;

The soft sky and the warm sun say,
He 'll kindly hear.

And they lowly knelt, those sisters sweet,
With eyes of blue
Like the spring violets at their feet —
How reverent too!

List'ning aside with trembling thought
Of life's far way,
Rough, cold and drear for feet untaught, —
I too will pray.

O Father, Saviour, Holy Friend,
Shield from all harm!
Clasp them while earth's strange woes impend
Safe in thy arm.

CHASTENING PAIN.

Pain! pain! ah yes, I know that thou wilt cling
Around my life, and ceaseless strive to bring
Thy chains to bind my soul a captive. Yet
Ungentle power, my soul may not forget
Its spell to master thine. Have I not stood,
When the swift dream of all things fair and good
Rose like a memory to my inward eye,
In such tranced joy, so wondrous and so high,

That a pure seraph breast might feel no more,
And death were a light pang to win such store?

Thou wilt return, stern monitor, and guide
Till, wisely calm, my life renounce its pride;
But oh, deal gently with the wasting form
Blighted and worn by the long desolate storm, —
Deal gently with the tried and trembling heart —
Let the Love-Voice be heard ere I depart!

TAKE THOU THY MOTHER'S KISS.

Take thou thy mother's kiss, my slumbering one, —
Though marble-cold thy brow, and unreplying
Thy breathless lips, — yet take thy mother's kiss
And bear it with thee down to the death-chamber.
Oh! is there not some might in the fond love
Which clasps thee now, and goes with thee, even like
These stainless flowers, down to thy shadowy bed,
To make it fairer for thy gentle head?

Take thou, free spirit take this trembling kiss
And bear it with thee up to where Christ dwelleth.
When He shall smile, blessing his little one,
Then tell Him of thy sad, sad mother — pray
That his true light may rest on her wild way!
My last, my maiden sweet, has gained the shore,

The far, the shining shore where pain and death
Can never follow her.
Sternly thy bark,
Thy slender quivering bark was tossed amid
The deepening surges; but they toss no more.
White ministering hands of sister angels were
Stretched out to welcome thee, and thou art borne
On 'midst the golden streets and mansion walls
Of the pure spirit-dwelling, with the Lord.
His benediction o'er thy being now
Has healed death's bitterness, and thou art knowing
What means Life's crystal river brightly flowing.

A BIRD'S MINISTRY.

I THANK thee, O bird, for choosing
To build thy springtime nest
So near to my gentle sleepers, —
Not thou canst startle their rest.

They have not heeded thy gliding
In and out of the low cypress-tree
Where a fair and temple-like chamber
Is greenly encurtained for thee.

They heard not the whir of winglets
Passed over them day by day,

Nor the sweet home talk with thy nestlings
Stirred to life in the fragrant May:

But it seems as I watch thee in silence —
And the fancy is soothingly dear —
Thou knowest the dead were gentle,
And, living, would welcome thee near.

It seems as a benediction
With thy presence were falling around
On the turf and the flower and the sorrow, —
Oh lowly bird, how art thou crowned!

Our Father, who teachest the sparrow
To cheer us, while soft airs caress, —
May we learn, may we dare to believe them
As they tell of thy graciousness.

The lesson, the lesson we cherish
But fain we would learn it of Thee, —
We live, and we love, and we perish,
Is there more of our life than we see?

Hush, hush, all my soul from this question —
Clasp the treasure that is thine own,
Forgetting the words which are spoken,
Thou wouldst doubt if God spake from the throne.

MY PANSIES.

Sown in the earth my violet seeds,
My pansies bright and rare,
Attentive eyes oft turned to meet
A springing greenness there.

Still, sought I not alone fair form
Nor fair hues to the sight,
White streaked with azure, "paly gold"
Nor purple flashed with light:

For in the dear earth's wondrous power
To yield back every trust
We read slow rhythms of prophecy
That rise o'er death and dust.

Low in the earth my violet seeds,
My pansies bright and rare
Were laid, but now the bursting blooms
With beauty charm the air.

The pearly white, the royal dark,
Even as I hoped appear;
Praised be heaven's grace in little things —
In great we need not fear.

Low in the earth my loved ones lie,
My violets white and rare,
They wait the coming of their spring —
A new life grandly fair;

And upward from their lowly bed
My pansies brightly smile, —
I wait the slower, richer joy
With fervent faith the while.

SNOW IN MAY.

The snows came down in the air of May,
The brown earth hid them soon away;
The flowers smiled through the driving white,
They looked afar to a kinder light.

And thus, I thought, is a loving heart, —
If sorrow come it will bear its part —
Through driving snow and stormy strife
It holds the pledge of its better life.

For each awaits a welcome hour —
For loving heart and storm-beat flower, —
To each is near the Sovereign care
Unfolding its beauty for summer air.

To this darkened clime come not back, where time
And blight mar the fairest of flowers;
Though the light of home since thou passedst away
No more on our hearts nor our dim walls may play,
Thou angel, blest angel of ours.

Thy dwelling we 've sought, far, far beyond thought
And the reach of its loftiest powers;
But mayest thou stray in thy purity near
This realm of our grief with whispers of cheer,
Calm angel, bright angel of ours?

We know not — we bow — ceased vain questioning now;
We trust that, wherever thy bowers,
Thy satisfied soul with his likeness is blest
Who promised, and gives thee a fullness of rest,
Loved angel — *saved* angel of ours.

CHRISTMAS EVENING.

Sweet hours, from us and all the living
Ye glide once more away;
Bear with you our full hearts' thanksgiving,
O blessed day!

Young voices ripple clear and purely
The sacred hymn and line, —

Thy world's rejoicing, Christ, oh, surely!
Thou knowest, — and mine.

Ne'er can the heart — the world grow weary
Of one all-radiant Name;
Through morn, and eve, and midnight dreary,
It shines the same.

Dear Light! we feel — we feel thy brightness
Guiding mysteriously, —
Love's glow in more than starry whiteness,
We worship Thee!

TWILIGHT.

The evening twilight comes, — and how the room
We saw but with a careless eye by day
Grows magical, and answers back to thought
In meaning spells of sweet companionship!
Alone, the world might say, in gloomy night
Of deep midwinter, where, without, the snow
Weighs on the sighing pines till they are hushed,
As when cold grief sinks slow upon the heart
And has no language.
— Nay, alone? alone?
Why, in my fair and fire-glowed study-room
I 'm royally attended. There, behold,

Just far enough upon the wall to seem
As honored guests are large-browed Whittier,
And Lowell, — not too far, Italian Tasso
With graceful mien, the courtly soldier bard.
Turning in my slow carpet ramble back,
I linger long to meet the fixed grave eyes
Of Albert Dürer, — and the kindlier gaze
Of him, majestic for his goodness, loved,
Yet passed away ; — a still, clear, starry light
From us occulted.*

Here upon the easel
A picture leans of childlike innocence
Touched with the charm of coming womanhood,
A pearly ray of something more than light, —
This, too, occulted.

On the marble lie
Beneath my lamp Carlyle's best essays. He
Will speak his thought, his best, as loftily
As 't were a king's ear heard, I listening well,
As kings not always are when wise men speak.
O thunderer, speak now, and I shall hear
The boom of ocean, and the awful voice
Of all infinities, — infinity
Of space, of time, of life, of death, of woe,
And, fellest, mournfulest of all, the voice
Of mind's infinity of mocked despair.
Thou master spirit, couldst thou never find
In all the range of thy wide stormy way

* Longfellow.

One smiling hope, one golden sunset glow
To light the dark of our humanity?
Couldst thou not hear sometimes the whispers low
Of spirit-love hovering in all the air?
Then was thy hearing false, for they are there,
And hallowing through the cold material force.

I 'll bring Lord D'Encourt Tennyson — 't is true
I 'm royally attended. I can share
Even at my will the heart-toned melody
An Empress long has loved, — so, as I say
I bring Lord Tennyson; and lose myself
In idyls sweet of joy and nobleness.

If God so loved the world as to create
And people it, somewhere they are, the grand,
The good, the knightly true, — Arthur, brave Lancelot,
And white Sir Galahad. I have believed
In these; and will believe that I have found
Their counterpart in life's wild tournay, men
Whose looks were victories, whose thoughts were more
Than bugle echoes and the lance's point;
Men whom the bounding steed of well-earned fame
Bore proudly on, and yet, if they would speak
The voice was low; and, listen, they were telling
How bravely rode and conquered other knights.

IN MEMORIAM.

Snows drift across thy grave, my friend,
Snows drift across my heart;
We walked together in life's way, —
We must, yet cannot part.

Lowly they laid thy earth-form there,
Lonely I wander here,
Broken the tie, unclasped the chain
Whose severed links are dear.

Yet something of thy soul I know
Is lingering still with me, —
Would I could know some thoughts of mine
Dwell kindly still with thee!

Our hearth-fire brightly burns, O friend,
And in its glowing light
A chair stands waiting as of old
For thee — for thee to-night.

GENEVIEVE.

My heart-beloved, my sweet Genevieve,
Earth has thy form, — but never will I grieve
For thee for this. Thy pure poetic dreams,
Born of fresh youth and heaven's caressing beams

As lilies are, shall evermore be bright, —
For what can fade, O spirit, in that light
Where God is seen; and fear and doubt are things
That fetter not again life's upward wings.

HEARD.

THE words were true — my dream, my dream!
The words were true — my dream;
When sorrow-tost, thou loved and lost,
Thy whispers near me seem,
O friend,
Thy whispers near me seem.

The dreamings are so sweet, so sweet,
The dreamings are so sweet,
I will not, vain, ask heart nor brain
If they 're a fond deceit,
O friend,
If they 're a fond deceit.

It lingers still anear, anear,
It lingers still anear, —
Thy welcome tone, my loved, my own,
Thy greeting kind and dear,
O friend,
Thy greeting kind and dear.

THE LAST PAGE.

My work is finished, — shall cold scorning meet
Thoughts I have loved? Their fate let me confide
To Sovereign judgment; what earth may decide
I shall not know in the low slumber sweet
Which waits me where no voice my ear can greet
That comes not wafted from the spirit side
Of the still mystery which doth divide
Present from future as a calm retreat.

Of all the vanished loved no one returns,
No eye unseals with us to smile or weep;
Its trust from Thee, O God, my spirit learns.
Through all the boundlessness of thought's lone deep,
Thine is the guiding light that purely burns,
The welcome thine for which my faint life yearns.

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